

THE
ROMANCE OF THE VEIL.

THE EAST
IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE
ROMANCE OF EL.

CHAPTER I.

AMONG the early monkish travellers a conspicuous place is due to Friar Odorico da Porde-
none, commonly called the Beatus or Beato (the
Beatified). He was born in the district of Por-
denone in the Friuli, about the year 1286. Early
in life he entered the Order of the Friars Mino-
rites, or Franciscans, and took the vows in their
house at Udine. After divers years of exemplary
life and industry, he girded up his loins for the
perilous pilgrimage and great mission—that is, he
proceeded to the remote countries of the East to
convert the infidel and idolator. He is believed to
have been absent from Italy for the long space of
sixteen years. Garbled as is the narrative of his
travels, it is clear that he went over more ground
and saw more of this globe than any other of the
early travellers, Marco Polo himself scarcely ex-
cepted. He took with him his monastic habit, his
cord, and his pilgrim's staff, and apparently no
other thing. Where there were Christians, he
claimed their charity; and where there were none,
he threw himself upon the hospitality of the un-
believers. It is probable that, like many other

Catholic known for arts, or pay for all they present night st Central Asia monaries of a later date, he had some cine and of some other sciences people of the East would gladly sink, and lodging, which were all they wanted. Even at the venturous physician or surgeon constantinople and travel through out needing either money or and without taking anything with him beyond a few pill-boxes. Friar Odorico went from the Adriatic Sea to Constantinople, and proceeding from that great city to the Black Sea, he landed at Trebizond. From Trebizond he travelled through Armenia, Persia, and other countries, until he came to Ormuz on the Persian Gulf. There he again embarked, and crossing the Indian Ocean he reached the coast of Malabar. Thence he turned round upon Ceylon. He landed in that magnificent island and travelled through the greater part of it. From Ceylon he voyaged to Meliapore. After this he ran down the Indian Ocean to Sumatra and Java, whence he appears to have reached some of the islands included in the empire of Japan. Then re-ascending towards the north, he entered the empire of China, which country he calls Manzi or Manzu, where he remained several years. He travelled through various of the vast provinces of China, and particularly in the country called Cathay, from which the Europeans so long named the whole of the Empire. When he quitted China he turned towards the regions of the West, and after long and dangerous wayfaring he entered the country of Thibet. Here the account left of his travels breaks off abruptly, leaving us entirely in the dark as to the route and the manner by which

he reached Europe. It is known, postscript to his book, that he when he was only forty-four years appears to have been broken privations he had undergone tions; and he died within arrival in his own country.

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The said postscript informs us that he, friar Odorico, dictated by word of mouth the brief account of his travels to Friar Guglielmo da Solanga, being by his superior required so to do upon his obedience; and that whatsoever was written in the book he had either seen with his own eyes, or had heard the same reported by credible and substantial persons:—that Friar Guglielmo da Solanga wrote his words in Latin, but without caring to write them in difficult Latin, or in an eloquent style, but even as he Odorico himself had rehearsed them, to the end that simple men might the more easily understand the things reported. Part of this postscript must have been written after the death of Odorico. It concludes thus:—

“The common report of the countries where I was testifieth those things which I say to be true. Many other things I have omitted because I beheld them not with mine own eyes, nor heard them upon good testimony. Howbeit, from day to day, I do purpose with myself to travel again into those far countries, in which action I dispose myself to die or live, as it shall please my God . . . In the year, therefore, of our Lord 1331 (*the year after the heroic monk's return*), the foresaid friar Odorico, preparing himself for the performance of his intended journey, in order that his travel and labour might be to greater purpose, he determined to present himself unto Pope John XXII., whose benediction being received, he, with a certain number of friars willing

to bear him company, might convey himself unto all the countries of the world. And as he was travelling towards the Pope, who is not far distant from the city of Pisa, there meets him by the way a certain old man, in the habit and attire of a pilgrim, saluting him by name, and saying, 'All hail, Friar Odorico!' And when the good friar demanded how he had knowledge of him, the pilgrim answered, 'Whilst thou wast in India I knew thee full well. Yea, and I knew thy holy purpose also. But see now that thou returnest immediately unto the convent from whence thou comest, for ten days hence thou shalt depart out of this present world!' Wherefore, being astounded and amazed at these words (especially as the old man vanished out of his sight presently after he had spoken them), Friar Odorico determined to return. And so he did return in perfect health, feeling no crazedness nor any infirmity of body. And being in his own convent at Udine, in the province of Padua, the tenth day after the aforesaid vision, having received the blessed communion, and preparing himself unto God, yea, being strong and sound of body, he happily rested in the Lord, whose sacred departure was announced unto the Pope aforesaid, under the hand of the public notary of Udine."*

The monks of his order and house reported to the Pope that, before the death of Odorico, many and sundry miracles had been wrought by his prayers; and it was upon these reports that the bold traveller was admitted among the number of the beatified. The same credulity subsequently threw miracles and marvels into his travels, altering and greatly adding to the simple honest narrative which he had dictated to his brother monk Guglielmo da Solanga. This friar Guglielmo appears to have been a native of Bassano. No copy of his original Latin manuscript has ever been discovered. Although the different relations

* Hakluyt—Ramusio.

of Odorico's travels seem all to have been originally derived from one and the same source, or from the account written by Friar Guglielmo under the dictation of the traveller, in the course of the increasing and multiplying of copies they are become so different and so contradictory among themselves, that scarcely one of them can be said to resemble any other. This, according to Tiraboschi, has been the effect of the ignorance and caprice of the various copyists, who, perhaps, not considering the things related in the travels as sufficiently marvellous, have flattered themselves that they were doing a most praiseworthy deed by supplying with their fancy what Odorico had never dictated, and by collecting as many fables as they could from other travellers or dreamers. But to this must be added the excessive and wilful exaggerations and falsifications of the monks of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. Although no copy of the original manuscripts exists, we can trace the progress of amplification and error by comparing the oldest and best account of the travels extant, with some of the later narratives of friar Odorico's life and adventures. In the first the marvellous or incredible things are but few; in the last they are numerous, and many marvels are introduced by falsifying the old text. An example or two will suffice not only for the present occasion, but also in the case of many an old traveller, whose sober manuscript has been equally tampered with.

In the old account there is not a word about horses with six legs and six feet, ostriches with two heads, and men with one eye; but all these monsters are found in the later accounts. In the amplified monkish narratives Odorico is made to say that he

was prevented from ascending Mount Ararat, on which Noah's ark had rested, and on whose summit part of the ark was still to be seen, by his travelling companions, who assured him that no mortal man had ever been able to get to the top of that mount, as God opposed all such attempts. In the older account it is said simply that few had been able to reach the summit on account of the steepness of the mountain, and the great quantity of snow by which it was constantly covered ; and this is strictly true even in our own time. In the old narrative Odorico says that the king of a certain country, which he calls Zapa, had fourteen magnificent elephants : under the magnifying pen of Bolandus, these fourteen elephants become fourteen thousand.

It may safely be said that in the older account, which is the first of the two printed by Ramusio, the truth not only far exceeds the fable, but also that much which was once considered as fabulous may now be proved to be true. In it Odorico speaks correctly of the beautiful scenery of the Malabar coast, and of the perfumes which floated from it far over the ocean. Like the rest of these very early travellers, he merely glances at such things, never attempting what we now call picturesque description. But what he saw and scented has been beautifully and accurately described by a modern traveller of his own country and profession :—

“ Nothing can be more enchanting to the eye, or delicious to the senses, than is experienced in a voyage near the extremity of this peninsula. At the distance of three or four leagues from the coast, the country of Malabar appears like a theatre of verdure ; here a grove of cocoa-trees, and there a beautiful river pouring its tri-

bute into the ocean, through a valley irrigated and fertilized by its waters. In one place a group of fishing-vessels, in another a white church peering through the verdure of the groves ; while the gentle land-breeze of the morning wafts the fragrance exhaled from the pepper, cardamum, betel, and other aromatics, to a great distance from the shore, and perfumes the vessel as she passes." * * *

Odorico gives a rational account of the pepper trade on the Malabar coast, and of the Christians of St. Thomas, who had been settled there for many ages, and unto whom Alfred the Great had sent his honourable mission. These fair, white Christian churches, together with the stately and beautiful pagodas and temples of the Hindus, were destroyed by the Mohammedan fanaticism of Tippoo Sultaun, towards the close of the eighteenth century, when the Mysoreans conquered that country.

In every one of the existing manuscripts Odorico is made to speak of his having sailed in an immense trading-vessel which carried seven hundred people. Precisely the same kind of great ship had been described by Agatharchides, the Greek geographer, who flourished fifteen centuries before the time of our good old Minorite ; and in our own day, five hundred and more years after Odorico's death, the Indian Ocean is annually traversed by the same manner of huge vessel from Guzerat. The old account says that friar Odorico not merely passed by, but landed and travelled in the island of Ceylon ; and the general description given of that island is far from being inaccurate ; it, in fact, contains many things which could have been col-

* Travels of Fra Paolino, as quoted by Dean Vincent, in 'Commerce and Navigation of the Ancients in the Indian Ocean.'

lected only by one who had travelled in the country. It sets down the circumference of the island at about 2000 miles. It describes the enormous quantity of wild beasts, particularly of elephants, which are found in the interior of the country; the blood-sucking worms which render the passage through the forests and jungles so painful to Europeans; it correctly describes the general qualities of that remarkable tree the talipot, which flourishes most in the island of Ceylon and in the contiguous Malabar country. There is also a general description of that stupendous isolated cone which the Christians of the island call Adam's Peak, and which the natives call the Holy Mount, the Mallua Sree Pada, or the Hill of the Sacred Foot. The Cingalese tradition, prevalent among that people even in our own time, is faithfully reported:—the first father of the human race had left the impression of his foot in the hard granite rock, as, with one stupendous stride, he stepped from the island to the continent. But the account dwells more particularly upon the local traditions as they had been embellished and amplified by the Mohammedan Arabs who traded from the mouth of the Red Sea and from the Persian Gulf, and who from the ninth down to the end of the fifteenth century occupied a considerable portion of Ceylon in sovereignty. According to these magnificent fables, which appear to have found favour among the Christians of St. Thomas on the Malabar coast, it was upon this mountain that Adam and Eve mourned five hundred years for the loss of Abel. Very few Europeans have ever accomplished the difficult ascent of the peak, but we know from Mr. Marshall's careful description, written on the

spot, that there is, in the granite rock which forms the apex of the cone, a hollow about five feet and a half long by two feet and a half broad, and which is reported by the Buddhists to be the footmark of Buddh, and by the native Christians and Mohammedans to be the footmark of Adam. There is no lake at the top of the mountain, where indeed there would be no room for it, the narrow apex only measuring twenty-three paces by eighteen.* But there are springs and lakes in the flank of that mountain, near the top; and it is of one of these that friar Odorico speaks. He says that in the midst of this mountain he found a lovely plain and a small lake containing great plenty of water, and that the people of the island told him that the lake had been filled, at the time of the world's infancy, by the tears of Adam and Eve. "But," adds the friar, "I perceived this to be false, for I saw the water flowing from the mountain into the lake, and filling it." He adds that this water was full of leeches and precious stones. All the waters of Ceylon swarm with leeches: the precious stones are probably an insertion of the copyists. Hindus, Buddhists, Moors, Christians, and the people of every creed or sect that live in Ceylon or in the nearer parts of the Malabar coast, regard this stupendous peak as a holy mountain, even as our friar describes it. The pearl fishery of Ceylon is described with scarcely any exaggeration. In the neighbouring continent some of the Brahminical superstitions are correctly set down, such as the reverence paid to oxen, the sacrifices of human life to Juggernaut, the Suttee, or widow-burning, &c.

* Ceylon, &c. By Henry Marshall. Lond. 1846.

The excessive barbarity and the indisputable cannibalism of the Andaman Islands, which are called the Bodan or Bandan Islands, are accurately noted, even as they were by Marco Polo. Odorico was the first of all our European travellers to describe the ingenious Chinese practice of catching fish by means of tame and trained cormorants and other diving birds; it being observable that this curious circumstance escaped the notice of Marco Polo, or at least was not described by him. In the account of his travels which we are following, the honest friar says that beyond India, in the city of Fuco (Fucheu, the capital of Fokien), he saw large fowls or diving birds catching fish in a river; that these birds had a string about their throats to prevent their swallowing the fish they caught; and that when they had caught as many fish for their master as filled three baskets, the strings were removed from their throats and they were allowed to return to the water and fish on their own account; and that so soon as their appetites were satisfied they returned again to their master, and allowed themselves to be fastened to a pole. This is a perfectly accurate description of what is still seen in many parts of China. The friar seems to have thought that fish so caught could not be good, but he naïvely assures us that, upon tasting them after they had been cooked, he found them very good indeed.

We shall not follow friar Odorico through China, as the romantic stories relating to that country have been discussed in treating of Marco Polo; but we will devote a few pages to one or two of the marvels *par excellence* which are described as existing in countries to the westward of China.

Although these strange stories exist in the best or oldest of the narratives, we very much doubt whether they were told, as they there stand, by Odorico. In connection with such subjects we need not trouble the reader with any attempt to show the latitude and longitude of the localities. Such attempt would be as much out of place as those which have been made by commentators of Shakspeare to specify, fix, define, and describe the Mediterranean island whereon Prospero exercised his magic, or to prove that Perdita might really have been shipwrecked on the coasts or deserts of Bohemia. Here again we have the tale of Senex de Monte, or the Old Man of the Mountain, which had so wide a range and so mysterious an origin. It is introduced by another story about a "certain rich man who was fed and nourished by fifty virgins." Odorico is made to say—

"While I was in the province of Manay I passed by the palace of a certain famous man, who hath fifty virgin damsels continually attending upon him, feeding him every meal as a bird feeds her young ones. Also he hath sundry kinds of meat served in at his table, and three dishes of each kind; and when the said virgins feed him they sing most sweetly. This man hath in yearly revenues thirty thuman of tagars of rice, every of which thuman yieldeth ten thousand tagars, and one tagar is the burthen of an ass. This palace is two miles in circuit, the pavement whereof is one plate of gold and another of silver. Near unto the wall of the said palace there is a mount, artificially wrought with gold and silver, whereupon stand turrets and steeples, and other delectable things, for the solace and recreation of the fore-said great man."

This palace was made even larger, and more magnificent, and more richly ornamented, by later

travellers or compilers. Southey had these descriptions in his mind when he wrote of that "prodigious pile"—

" Fabric so vast, so lavishly enriched,
For idol, or for tyrant, never yet
Raised the slave race of men
In Rome, nor in the elder Babylon,
Nor old Persepolis,
Nor where the family of Greece
Hymned Eleutherian Jove." *

But let us return to Friar Odorico, who continues—

" And it was told me that there were four such men in the said kingdom. It is accounted a great grace for the men of that country to have long nails upon their fingers, and especially upon their thumbs, which nails they may fold about their hands: but the grace and beauty of the women is to have small and slender feet; and therefore the mothers, when their daughters are young, do bind up their feet, that they may not grow great. Travelling on further towards the south, I arrived at a certain country called Melistorte, which is a very pleasant and fertile place. And in this country there was a certain aged man called Senex de Monte, who round about two mountains had built a wall to enclose the said mountains. Within this wall there were the fairest and most crystal fountains in the whole world; and about the said fountains there were most beautiful virgins in great number, and goodly horses also, and, in a word, everything that could be devised for bodily solace and delight; and therefore the inhabitants of the country call the same place by the name of Paradise.

" The said Senex, when he saw any proper and valiant young man, would admit him into his Paradise. Moreover, by certain conduits he makes wine and milk to flow abundantly. This Senex, when he hath a mind

* 'Thalaba.'

to revenge himself or to slay any king or baron, commandeth him that is governor of the said Paradise to bring thereunto some of the acquaintance of the said king or baron, permitting him awhile to take his pleasures therein, and then to give him a certain potion, being of force to cast him into such a slumber as should make him quite void of all sense, and, so being in a profound sleep, to convey him out of his Paradise; who, being awaked and seeing himself thrust out of the Paradise, would become so sorrowful that he could not in the world devise what to do or whither to turn him. Then would he go unto the foresaid old man, beseeching him that he might be admitted again into his Paradise: who saith unto him, 'You cannot be admitted thither unless you will slay such or such a man for my sake; and if you will give the attempt only, whether you kill him or no, I will place you again in Paradise, and there you may remain always.' Then would the party, without fail, put the same in execution, endeavouring to murder all those against whom the said old man had conceived any hatred. And therefore all the kings of the East stood in awe of the said old man, and gave unto him great tribute.

"And when the Tartars had subdued a great part of the world, they came unto the said old man and took him from the custody of his Paradise; who, being incensed thereat, sent abroad divers desperate and resolute persons out of his forenamed Paradise, and caused many of the Tartarian nobles to be slain. The Tartars, seeing this, went and besieged the city wherein the said old man was, took him, and put him to a most cruel and ignominious death." *

This story of the Old Man of the Mountain, or Prince of the Assassins, which is told with still further detail by Marco Polo, had been rumoured throughout Europe by the first Crusaders, two centuries before the time either of Marco or of Friar Odorico. It seems that in the superstition

* Hakluyt.

of those ages the Old Man was believed to be as long lived as the Delhi Llama of Thibet. The mysterious association of which he was, or *they* were (for we fancy there was a succession of these terrible chiefs) the head, fills no inconsiderable portion of the histories of the Crusades. We would merely hint here our suspicion that the whole of this passage in the friar's travels is an interpolation or an addition made by some copyist many years after Odorico and honest Friar Guglielmo had ceased to exist.

The Old Man, or the Old Men of the Mountain, had, it should seem, various habitats at various periods; but he, or they, certainly occupied for a considerable space of time a lofty and commanding ridge in the valley of the Sha Rood, or southern branch of the Kizil Ouzan, in the province of Tarim in Persia, which was invaded and conquered by the Tartars two centuries before the travels of Odorico da P'ordemone. A few years ago the spot was visited by an enterprising and scientific English traveller:—

“As Menjile,” says Colonel Monteith, “was a very important geographical position, I determined to halt for some days, to enable us to examine the valley of the Sha Rood river, which is celebrated as having been the residence of the chief of the Assassins, or Old Man of the Mountains. . . . Having been previously well informed respecting the existence of the fortress inhabited by the *Assassins*, and several respectable people at Kasbine having offered to accompany me thither, I was surprised at all the inhabitants of Menjile declaring they never had heard the story, and were ignorant of the existence of the ruins. Knowing that they were situated on the banks of the Sha Rood, I determined to follow that river to its source, or until I found the object of my

search. On the following day I ascended the valley, over a most excellent road, and forded the river with great difficulty at the seventh mile, to look at some ruins, which proved to be of modern construction. I passed, at the twelfth mile, Loushan; and, at the twenty-eighth, Berenzini, where we learnt that the object of our search was still distant thirty-five or forty miles; the road was good throughout, and the valley about three miles broad After a long and fatiguing march of thirty-six miles from Berenzini we reached Jirandey, just where the stream from the mountains of Ala Mout, in Mazanderan, which are perpetually covered with snow, joins the stream of Khernan, coming from the mountains behind Kasbine. We now commenced the ascent of a rugged and steep mountain, on the top, or rather round the sides, of which (for it enclosed a considerable portion of the upper part) ran a wall, strongly built of stone. On the top is a tower, which, being totally enclosed within the outer wall, was probably solely intended as a look-out. On one side, over a deep ravine, appears to have stood a considerable residence, and it formerly had a communication by a narrow staircase with a garden below. The lower part of the mountain has been formed into terraces; but the whole is far from answering the description of the terrestrial Paradise described by some authors; the climate is decidedly cold, and for at least half the year it must have been a disagreeable habitation. The power of this chief, whom I cannot help considering as the head of some religious sect of the Ismaelites, is said to have extended over both the districts of Taroorm and Rood Bar; that is, the princes who then governed Persia allowed him to collect the revenues of those districts as a bribe for his forbearance, or to secure his aid against their enemies. The limits of this paper will not allow of a discussion regarding this sect, concerning whom volumes have already been written. Being originally schismatics in the very commencement of Mohammedanism, they were persecuted with unrelenting cruelty by the first Kalifs, and ultimately had recourse

to assassination as a defence against their powerful enemies. They derive their name of Assassins from the corruption of Hassain, one of their most celebrated leaders. There were several divisions of them scattered through Syria, Kurdistan (near the Cape of Wan), and Asia Minor; but all acknowledged as imaum, or high-priest, the chief residing at the place here mentioned. Innumerable anecdotes are still related of the address with which they introduced themselves into the service of the greatest men in Asia. More than one prince, who undertook expeditions against them, were killed before arriving at their castle. Houlakoo Khan, grandson of Gengis, took this fortress, and put many of them to the sword: they, however, must subsequently have succeeded in re-establishing themselves, as Timor again undertook an expedition against them with his usual success. In the building I visited there are no inscriptions. A bath, reservoir, and extensive walls are the only buildings now remaining.”*

But the most marvellous incident in Odorico's travels is the following:—

“There was another terrible thing which I saw there; for, passing by a certain valley, which is situate beside a pleasant river, I saw many dead bodies, and in the said valley also I heard divers sweet sounds and harmonies of music, especially the noise of citherns, whereat I was greatly amazed. This valley containeth in length seven or eight miles at the least, into the which whosoever entereth dieth presently, and can by no means pass alive through the midst thereof; for which cause, all the inhabitants thereabout decline unto the one side. Moreover, I was tempted to go in, and to see what it was. At length, making my prayers and recommending myself to God in the name of Jesu, I entered, and saw such swarms of dead bodies there as no man would believe

* ‘Journal of a Tour through Azerdbijan and the Shores of the Caspian, by Colonel Monteith, E. I. C.,’ in the ‘Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London,’ vol. iii. 1833.

unless he were an eye-witness thereof. At the one side of the foresaid valley, upon a certain stone, I saw the visage of a man, which beheld me with such a terrible aspect that I thought verily I should have died in the same place. But always this sentence, *The Word became flesh and dwelt among us*, I ceased not to pronounce, signing myself with the sign of the cross; and nearer than seven or eight paces I durst not approach unto the said head; but I departed and fled unto another place in the said valley, ascending up into a little sandy mountain, where, looking round about, I saw nothing but the said citherns, which methought I heard miraculously sounding and playing by themselves without the help of musicians. And, being upon the top of the mountain, I found silver there, like the scales of fishes, in great abundance: and I gathered some part thereof into my bosom, to show for a wonder, but my conscience rebuked me; I cast it upon the earth, reserving no whit at all unto myself, and so, by God's grace, I departed without danger. And when the men of the country knew that I was returned out of the valley alive, they revered me much, saying that I was baptized and holy, and that the foresaid bodies were men subject unto the devils infernal, who used to play upon citherns, to the end they might allure people to enter, and so murder them."

Here we have a tale worthy of Sindbad the Sailor, and one which was probably derived originally from the same abundant source of fable or Oriental exaggeration. A similar narrative is still part of the staple of the professional itinerant story-tellers in Turkey, the only noticeable difference being that the adventurous traveller who goes safely through the deadly valley is not a Christian monk, but a devout Mohammedan, a santon or dervish. Although friar Odorico is made to speak in his own person, and to say, not that he heard the account from the report of others, but that he saw the valley with his own eyes, and heard the sound with his own

ears, it may very safely be assumed that the description is not his. Incredible things he might repeat upon hearsay, but he appears to have been incapable of falsifying what really came under the cognizance of his own senses. The judicious Tira-boschi makes a stand on the religious, devout character, and many virtues of the old traveller, and thinks that, though his simplicity might be imposed upon, he was incapable of telling that which he knew to be false. It is probable that, *ab origine*, the story of the fearful valley was merely an exaggerated account of the retreat or hiding-place of some desperate band of robbers.

We shall meet the tale again still more circumstantially and more terribly told in the travels of our own countryman Sir John de Mandeville. For some ages no account of the East was considered perfect or at all satisfactory unless it included the stories of the Old Man of the Mountain and the Perilous Valley. And, besides these two, there were other tales that were stock-matter, and unhesitatingly repeated by one copyist, or compiler, or editor after another, the trifling alterations made in the course of years being generally more on the side of exaggeration than on that of sobriety.

The travels of Pordenone remained inedited and unprinted until the diligent Ramusio took them up and inserted them in his great collection, published at Venice in the year 1588. It is quite certain that Ramusio had no access to the original Latin manuscript written under Odorico's dictation by Friar Guglielmo da Solagna, as also that he was perplexed and bewildered by the altered and amplified manuscripts before him. He even gives two accounts of these Eastern travels, as if they

related to two distinct journeys undertaken at different times ; which they assuredly did not. The good old monk only made one long journey, and died while preparing for the second. The two manuscripts placed in Ramusio's hand relate to one and the same expedition, but so much do they vary from one another, that the industrious old Venetian may be excused for the error he committed. Very soon after his publication our old excellent collector, Richard Hakluyt, published the longer and better of the two narratives in London.

We have read both the Italian and the English. The latter is, like all the rest of Hakluyt's performances, a fine, unaffected specimen of our Elizabethan prose. It has been said, too inconsiderately, that Friar Odorico "seems to have been much more skilled in the conversion of infidels, than in the arts of composition."* There exists no specimen by which his composition may be judged ; and, according to the account of his travels we possess, he boasted neither skill nor success in the conversion of semi-savages, but was as much disappointed in the spiritual result of his pilgrimages as Carpini and Rubruquis had been before him.

It is not, even now, beyond the limits of possibility, that the original Latin MS., or some contemporary copy of it, may be found in the cob-webbed, unfrequented library of an out-of-the-way Franciscan convent, in a nook of the Apennines or elsewhere. The Italians designate a miserly, inhospitable man by saying that his kitchen is the coldest part of his house. The state of learning among the present Franciscan friars of the South may be sufficiently explained by stating that their

* Retrospective Review, Art. on Sir John Mandeville.

libraries are the apartments they most rarely enter. Upon asking the Guardiano or Padre Superiore of the Franciscans at Sorrento for access to his library, we were ourselves told that we were welcome to examine it, provided only we would send across the bay to Naples for a locksmith to pick the lock—seeing that the key had been lost in the time of his predecessor, a good many years ago, and the door had never been opened since! We brought a locksmith, and found as voluminous a collection of spider-weaving as heart could desire. We did not find what we were then in search of; but the neglected library contained some old and curious things. In some such deposit the MS. which Father Odorico dictated may, perchance, be turned up. The French Republicans and Bonapartists, who ransacked the libraries of the learned and polite Benedictines for rare books and MSS., seldom examined the houses of the Mendicant orders, who had become slothful, vulgar, and ignorant, although in earlier ages they had produced so many men eminent for their industry, learning, and genius. Since the French occupation of the country there has been no general hunt after rarities: save now and then by an enthusiastic young man—a pedestrian traveller that can linger where he chooses, and shape his course according to his fancy, without caring for high roads, or inns, or creature comforts, and that can content himself, on occasion, with the hard pallet and simple fare of the friars—the remote houses of the Franciscans are never entered by foreign travellers: the Italian litterati and antiquaries rarely travel at all; and the poor monks are too ignorant to know the value of an old MS. if it should fall into their hands, and, in such mat-

ters at least, much too careless and indolent to make any research. The monks of Sorrento were not, we presume, the only Franciscans who had lost the key of their library. We never knew a monk of this order in Italy—and our acquaintance with the order was very extensive—but was ready to exclaim with Dan Chaucer,

“ What ! shulde he studie and make himselfen wood
Upon a book in cloistre alway to pore,
Or swinken with his hondes, and labourc.”

The name of Odorico da Pordenone is Latinized “ *Odericus de Porta Naonis*,”—a name which must be borne in mind by such as examine ancient libraries or read old books. The French call the good old Minorite *Oderic* or *Oderique de Portenau*, an awkward and inappropriate designation which has been very commonly followed by English writers.

CHAPTER II.

WHILE Odorico da Pordenone was travelling in India, Balducci Pigolotti, another brave monk, was performing a journey to Peking, other Italians were wandering in the far East, and a countryman of our own was displaying that passion for travel which has since become so much a national characteristic. This last wayfarer was the renowned Sir John Mandeville, whose narrative, or the book or books we possess as such, may be considered as the very perfection of the "Romance of Travel." Yet, is not our valorous knight to be lightly set down as a romancer in whom there is no truth whatever. The season for such sweeping and easy condemnation is past: the incredulity of indolence and ignorance is no longer tolerated; except among certain professional reviewers, men are expected to read a book before they presume to decide upon its merits—and an attentive perusal of Mandeville will prove that he has much that is true mixed up with much that is utterly fabulous.

"Of all these old travellers," says a recent writer, with proper feeling, "Mandeville is by far the most likely to enjoy permanent reputation, at least with English readers; the position he occupies is honourable throughout, both to himself and to his country, for he everywhere maintains the character of a gentleman, a gallant soldier, and devout but candid Christian, journeying in upright intention, and complete independence, whither he listeth,

to gratify his curiosity and thirst for information." *

Our Englishman, in fact, seems to have been impelled solely by his desire to gratify curiosity and his love of adventure: trade he left to the merchant, and proselytism to the monk; but he became a soldier in the East, in order that he might command the means of gratifying his two ruling passions, and it seems probable that he also practised the healing as well as the killing art, for it is reported of him that he was very learned, and that his favourite pursuit in early life was the study of medicine. As a good physician may heal more men than a soldier can kill, Sir John may have consoled his conscience (if the conscience of a good Christian of those days could have been troubled by slaying infidels) by thus balancing the two liberal professions. His other acquirements seem to be proved by the fact that he wrote the account of his travels in two, if not three, different languages. If his book had no other claim to our attention and reverence, it would be valuable and venerable for this—it is one of the very earliest and best specimens we possess of English prose composition.

Sir John Mandeville, or de Mandeville, was born in the picturesque old town of St. Alban's at the beginning of the fourteenth century. The precise date of his birth is not set down, but it was in all probability in the year 1301 or 1302, during the latter part of the long reign of Edward I. The noble family from which he descended had been settled in England ever since the Norman Conquest. One, at least, of the name had gone crusad-

* Retrospective Review.

ing with Richard Cœur-de-Lion. Very unusual care—for that time, and for a layman—was bestowed on the education of young John. Besides medicine, he studied mathematics, theology, and natural history, as it could then be taught. All the errors and fables that existed in the translations and abridgments of Pliny, Aristotle, and other ancient writers, were certainly made very familiar to his mind; and the monsters which afterwards crowded his pages were little more than the recollections of the hearty undoubting reading of his early youth. In the words of one of his eulogists and epitaph-writers, he was a man distinguished by his morals, religion, genius, candour, and descent,—

“Moribus, ingenio, candore, et sanguine clarus,
Et vere cultor Religionis erat.”

It has been said that for some years in England he followed medicine as a profession; but this is, at the least, doubtful; for the cure of the body was universally left to those who charged themselves with the care of the soul; a good Christian would not willingly intrust his health to a leech that was neither monk nor priest, and the rank of Sir John's family put him above any *profession* but that of arms. Besides, he was but a very young man when he quitted England. It is safer to say that little—very little—is known either of his earlier or later days.

In 1322—the year which saw the horrible close of the unhappy reign of Edward II.—six years before the birth of Geoffrey Chaucer, who drew no small portion of his inspiration from what had originally been Eastern sources, and who sang of “the

lond of Tartarie," the "King of Arabie and of Inde," and of "this noble King yelep'd Cambuscan," our brave St. Alban's Mandeville set out from home for the Holy Land. He saith himself—

"Forasmuch as the land beyond the sea—that is to say, the HOLY LAND, that men call the Land of Promysson, or of Behest, passing all other lands—is the most worthy of land, the most excellent, the lady and sovereign of all other lands, and is blessed and hallowed of the precious body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; in the which land it liked him to take flesh and blood of the Virgin Mary, to environ that Holy Land with his blessed feet; and there he would, of his blessedness, encumber him in the said blessed and glorious Virgin Mary and become man, and work many miracles, and preach and teach the faith and the law of Christian men unto his children; and there it liked him to suffer many reprovings and scorns for us; and He that was King of Heaven, of Air, of Earth, of Sea, and of all things that be contained in them, would all only be called King of that Land, when he said, '*Rex sum Judeorum*—I am the King of the Jews'. . . . And forasmuch as it is long time passed that there was no General Passage,* or voyage over the sea, and many men desire for to hear speak of the Holy Land, and have therein great solace and comfort, I John Mandeville, knight, albeit I be not worthy, that was born in England, in the town of Saint Alban, passed the sea in the year of our Lord Jesus Christ mcccxxii., on the day of St. Michael, and hitherto have been long time over the sea, and have seen and gone through many divers lands, and many provinces and kingdoms and isles, and have passed through Tartary, Persia, Armenia the little and the great, through Libya,

* The pilgrim voyage across the Mediterranean to Palestine was called "the General Passage," or "the Grand Passage." It had declined after the unsuccessful crusade of Louis IX.

Chaldea, and a good part of Ethiopia; through Amazonia, Inde the less and the more, a great part; and throughout many islands that be about India, where dwell many divers folks, and of divers manners and laws, and of divers shapes of men. Of which lands and isles I shall speak more plainly hereafter."

In this extract we have altered nothing but the orthography, nor shall we take any greater liberty with the quotations that are to follow. Yet the reader will find that, with this mere modernization of spelling, Mandeville's English is perfectly intelligible, and is far from being destitute of quaint grace.

Proceeding to Egypt, our traveller entered the service of Melik Madaroon, Sultan of that country, and fought and commanded in his wars against the Bedouene Arabs. When there was no fighting he seems to have practised as a physician at court. The Sultan became much attached to him :

"And," saith Sir John, "he would have married me full highly to a great prince's daughter, if that I would have forsaken my law and my belief. But, I thank God, I had no will to do it, for nothing that he behighten* me."

His personal narrative, as usual with these old travellers, is exceedingly meagre; he gives neither dates nor distances; it is not always easy to discover his course and progress, or the means by which they were made; and still more difficult is it to make out, from his own words, when he speaks from actual observation, and when from mere report, or upon the credit of ancient and (in good part) fabulous writers on natural history. It should

* Beseeched.

seem, however, that he remained a long time in the service of the liberal Sultan; that he had opportunities afforded him of visiting all Egypt, the nearer parts of Nubia, Arabia, Syria, the Holy Land, Rhodes, Cyprus, and other famed islands; and that he was treated everywhere with great respect and much kindness and hospitality. To presume that he *probably* saw Constantinople and went no further to the eastward,* because his account of the East contains fabulous matter, is ungenerously absurd, and a proposition which could hardly have been hazarded by any one who had read his travels or was conversant with the dissertations which have been written upon them. If errors of description and an admixture of the fabulous are to be held decisive of the fact, it might as safely be said that Mandeville was never even at Constantinople—nay, it might be affirmed that none of our old romantic travellers had ever travelled at all—that Marco Polo had never seen China, nor Oderico da Porde none India. Like other Europeans of the middle ages, Mandeville seems to have been excited by the reports he heard in Syria, Egypt, and on the shores of the Red Sea, concerning the wealth and beauty and fertility of the countries beyond the Indian Ocean. Although the Egyptian Sultan made many efforts, with generous offers, to retain him in his service, Sir John was impelled by a spirit of curiosity that would not be rebuked to visit some of those far-off lands. Together with four other adventurous Christian knights he resolved to go to the court of the Grand Khan of Tartary, who had lost some of his conquests in China, and was endeavouring to recover them. How the five knights

* Kerr, Hist. and Collection of Voyages and Travels.

and their attendants travelled we are not told. Mandeville drops down in Chinese Tartary like a lark from the sky into his nest.

"And ye shall understand," saith he, "that my fellows and I, with our yeomen, we served this emperor, and were his soldiers fifteen months against the king of Mancy, that held war against him. And the cause was for that we had great lust to see his noblesse and the estate of his court, and all his governance, to wis* if it were such as we heard say that it was."

Of these Tartarian wars or of his adventures in them no details whatever are given. The old travellers seem to have considered themselves, personally, as objects too insignificant to be dwelt upon in their descriptions of the stupendous wonders of the universe. They excited their readers, not with startling incidents and hair-breadth escapes, but with descriptions of nature's marvels and monsters, of the barbaric splendour of Oriental courts, the populousness of Eastern cities, and the gigantic works which had there been performed by the hands of man. To us a little more of their personal history would be highly interesting, but to their contemporaries, no doubt, their narrations were quite satisfactory without it. The far greater part of even the Old World was still, in a manner, *terra incognita* to the people of England and of all Europe; there was a lively curiosity to know something more about it, an easy, ready faith to believe in whatever was reported, and an insatiable appetite for the marvellous.

Mandeville appears to have penetrated into some of the regions which lie beyond the northern frontier of China, and to have heard tell of the thick

* To know.

ribbed ice, and never-melting snows, and never-ending nights of the Pole. He assures us that of one hemisphere he had seen 180 degrees, and of the other 95 degrees; and that, if means and opportunity had served, he would have gone all round the world! Yet, at this time, and indeed long after, the generally established belief was that the earth was not round but flat; and some of the zealous missionaries to the East anticipated the pleasure and glory of reaching the world's end, and planting the crucifix on the lofty, natural wall which separated it from infinite space. The startling assertion of his belief in the spherical form of the earth can hardly have been an interpolation of Mandeville's copyists or editors of a much later period, for it occurs in a MS. preserved in our National Library, which MS. is indisputably of the fourteenth century. In it the bold traveller says—

“ If I had company and shipping for to go more beyond, I trow well, in certain, that we should have seen all the roundness of that firmament, all about. . . . And right as the shipmen take their avis* here, and govern them by the load-star,† right so do shipmen beyond these parts, by the star of the south, the which star appeareth not to us; and this star that is towards the north that we clepen the load-star appeareth not to them. For which cause, men may well perceiue that the land and the sea be of round shape and form. For the part of the firmament showeth in one country that showeth not in the other country. And men may well proven by experience and sotile‡ compassment of wit, that if a man found passage by ships, that would go search the world, man might go by ship all about the world, and above and beneath.”

* Direction or guidance. † The North Pole star.

‡ Subtle, or subtile.

He also says distinctly,—“For our Lord made the Earth all round in the midst of the Firmament.”

He, however, frankly confesses that he is much perplexed and puzzled how to account why those men that dwell “benethen” us, should not fall away from the earth towards the firmament! It was not for a traveller of the Fourteenth Century to anticipate Sir Isaac Newton’s grand theory of the attraction of gravitation; but it was something, in those monkish ages, to revive the notion of the “thick rotundity of the globe,” and to offer so easy and intelligible an illustration, or so practical a confirmation of its correctness. Angeloni del Nero, Mandeville’s contemporary, of whom some notice will be taken in our next chapter, may very well have come to the same conclusion as to the spherical form of the earth, and Italian travellers of a date earlier than Angeloni must have seen the stars of the South Pole, and have ascertained that our cynosure, the North Pole star, was not visible in the other hemisphere. It is therefore *possible*—seeing that the Italians frequented the East more than any other European people in the middle ages, and that Mandeville, on his return, was in correspondence with some of the heads of the Roman church, and probably resided for some time in Italy or in the papal court at Avignon—that our Knight of St. Alban’s may have heard of those principles of cosmogony and astronomy which Angeloni and his predecessors had imported. But, even were this quite certain (which it is not), our countryman would not thereby be despoiled of all his merit, nor these curious passages in his book be rendered uninteresting. The monks and the

Inquisition soon re-made the world flat enough. Even at the beginning of the Seventeenth Century, when it was no longer possible to present our globe as a pancake, they persecuted Galileo for teaching that it moved round the sun. But Mandeville was honoured, not persecuted, by the Church ; and his travels, with whatsoever philosophy was in them, received a sort of *cum privilegio*, or *cum approbatione*, from the Sovereign Pontiff.

Either in going to, or in coming back from, the Court of the Grand Khan of Tartary, Mandeville must have traversed many other countries besides " Persia, and Armenia the little and the great ;" but, as we have already said, his itinerary is not to be traced. He tells us that he never thought of giving up travelling until the gout began to torment him sorely. Then he bethought him of the ease and comfort of home. It should appear that he returned to Europe in 1356, the year which saw the laurels of Crecy and Poitiers.* If this date is correct he had been absent from England during *thirty-four* years,—a period which the narrative by no means fills up satisfactorily. We would fain know whether, after his long and far wanderings, he returned to his native St. Alban's, and there, under the shadow of the glorious old Abbey, wrote his book ; but who shall tell us, when that book doth not ?

But what Mandeville plainly tells us is, that he wrote his book immediately after his return to Christendom ; that he put in it many things which he did not pretend to have known of his own knowledge, or to have seen with his own eyes ;—that he partly compiled his book " after information

* Retrospective Review.

of men that knowen of things that *he* had not seen," and submitted it to the judgment of the Pope,* who "remitted it to be examined and proved by the advys of his Council;" "by the which," he adds, "my Book was proved for true; insomuch that they showed me a book that my book was examined by,† that comprehended full much more, by an hundred parts, by the which the *Mappa Mundi* was made after."

Whatever may have been the amount of profane wit which the good Knight's narrative may have provoked in more modern and scoffing ages, it was recommended to his own time by a most serious, a solemn and devout promise.

"I pray to all readers and hearers of this book," saith Mandeville, "if it please them, that they would pray God for me; and I shall pray for them. And all those that say for me a *Pater Noster*, with an *Ave Maria*, that God forgive me my sins, I make them partners and grant them part of all the good Pilgrimages and of all the good deeds that I have done, if only (or any) be to God's pleasure; and not only of those past, but of all that ever I shall do unto my life's end."

It does not very clearly appear either *where* or *when* he wrote his book. John Bale would seem to intimate that he performed his literary labour in England; but at the end of one of the printed editions (in Latin) of the travels, it is mentioned that, being at *Liege*, Mandeville met with a venerable physician, called Johannes ad Barbam, or John of the Beard; that, after some conversation,

* Innocent VI. wore the tiara from 1352 to 1362. He was a liberal, enlightened, and virtuous Pope; by birth a Frenchman. He resided at Avignon, like his immediate predecessors.

† Probably the journals of some of the early missionaries.

he recollected that they had been acquainted at Grand Cairo in Egypt; and that this venerable man, after having rendered him singular service as a physician, both persuaded and assisted him to write his travels. This passage, however, does not appear in any of the old manuscripts. He says, or is made to say, of his work,

“ And ye shall understand that I have put this book out of Latin into French, and translated it again out of French into English, that every man of my nation may understand it.”

This, however, does not quite agree with what is said elsewhere. In some of the old printed copies of the *Travels* it is affirmed that he wrote them first of all in English, and then translated them into French and Latin. Nor is this the only discrepancy that occurs. Both manuscripts and printed copies often differ from each other; and it is not possible to decide which is right, or which of them contains the very words of Mandeville.

At the end of a French version are the following quaint, rude rhymes, which seem to intimate that Sir John was aware that all his stories, notwithstanding the testimony of the Pope and Sacred College of Cardinals, were not received as Gospel:—

“ S' on me donne peu de louange
Et qu'on me appelle mensonger
Pourceque mon livre est estrange
Il ne m'en chault a brief parler.
Qui ne m'en croit y peult aller
Ou j'ay esté pour en scavoir
Et la verité carculer
Et il dira que je dis voir.”

Or,

“ If scanty be my laud and praise,
And witless folk should call me liar,
For that my Book contains strange lays,
I will not storm nor burst with ire.
Let him who credits not my tales
Travel as far as I have been ;
Then may he tell if truth prevails,
In what I say that I have seen.”

Few critics, at any time, were likely to accept this challenge ; for, if it was not for every man to go to Corinth, still less easy was it to get to the Holy Land, and Libya and Ethiopia, and Tartary, and the land of Gog and Magog, and all those other lands beyond the Indian Ocean, where Mandeville had been.

In spite, however, of the cavils of the critical and incredulous, this remarkable book of travels became, in the course of a few years, exceedingly popular throughout Western Europe : many copies were made from the several MSS. in Latin, French, and English ; and, to a good many successive generations of men, Mandeville's was a pleasant and highly honoured name. The high sanction of the Pope recommended the book to all good Christians : it was exceedingly popular in Italy, and not less so in Germany. It was essentially what the Germans call a “ folk's book.” Its short stories, told in the plainest manner, were easily retained by the memory ; gossips recited them round the glowing hearth o' the winter nights, and nurses repeated them to their children, as now-a-days they tell Fairy Tales. The popular zoology of the fourteenth and the two following centuries was in good part built upon the Travels of our Knight of St. Alban's, who was most of all marvellous and

prodigious when he spoke of objects of natural history.

When or where Sir John died has not hitherto been positively ascertained. Liège, in the Netherlands, and his own native town in England, dispute the honour of having given him a grave. John Bale,* who is followed by Hakluyt, says that he died at Liège on the 17th of November, 1371, and that he was buried there in the Abbey of the order of the Gulielmites. Ortelius† has even printed his epitaph, which he says he found in the foresaid Abbey—

“Hic jacet vir nobilis, Dominus Johannes de Mandevile, aliter dictus *ad Barbam*, Miles, Dominus de Campdi, natus de Anglia, Medicinæ Professor, devotissimus Orator, et bonorum largissimus pauperibus erogator : qui toto quasi Orbe lustrato, Leodii diem vite sue clausit extremum, Anno Domini 1371, mensis Novembris die 17.

And Ortelius adds that, upon the same stone with the epitaph, was sculptured or engraved a man in armour, with a forked beard, treading upon a lion, and at the head of him, a hand of one blessing him, and these words in old French—
VOS KI PASSEIS SOR MI, POUR L'AMOUR DEIX,
PRIES POR MI [Ye that pass over me, for the

* John Bale, in Latin *Balcæis*, was Bishop of Ossory in Ireland, in the middle of the sixteenth century. His fame principally rests on his valuable collection of British biography, from which we have quoted, and which was first published in 1548, under the title of *Illustrium Majoris Britannicæ. Scriptorum, hoc est, Angliæ, Cambriæ, et Scotiæ Summarium*.

† Ortelius was contemporary with John Bale. He was born at Antwerp in 1527; he died in 1598, more than two centuries after the death of Mandeville.

love of God, pray for me]: that there was also a void place for a scutcheon; wherein he [Ortelius] was told there had formerly been a brass-plate, with the arms of Mandeville engraven thereon; viz., a Lion Argent, with a Lunet Gules at his breast, in a Field Azure, and a Bordure ingrated Or^m. And Ortelius further says that the monks of the abbey showed him also the knife, the horse-furniture, and the very spurs which Sir John had used in his travels. All this is very circumstantial, and might induce one to believe that Sir John was indisputably buried at Liège. Moreover, John Weever,* who wrote in the seventeenth century, assures us that he had seen at the Liège Abbey, the epitaph copied by Ortelius (Mandeville may very well have obtained the nickname of *ad Barbam*,† from his wearing a long beard in his old age), and that the following Latin verses were inscribed on a tablet which hung close by—

“Hoc jacet in Tumulo, cui totus Patria vivo
 Orbis erat: totum quem peragrassæ ferunt;
 Anglus Equesque fuit: nunc Ille Britannus Ulysses
 Dicatur; Graio clarus Ulysses magis.
 Moribus, ingenio, candore, et sanguine clarus,
 Et vere cultor Religionis erat.
 Nomen si queras, est Mandevil: Indus Arabsque
 Sat notum dicet Finibus esse suis.”

But, on the other side, the good people of St. Alban's, not satisfied with the honour of his birth, claimed that of his death and burial; and they pointed confidently to old inscriptions, epitaphs,

* Ancient Funeral Monuments.

† And from this nickname may have proceeded the story about that learned physician and good friend at Liège, *Johannes ad Barbam*.

and verses in their own glorious abbey. According to Sir Henry Chauncey,* and other and more ancient local historians, there was, on the second pillar north of the door at the western end of the nave of the abbey-church, the following inscription in the Gothic character (nearly defaced by white-wash), under a coat of arms :—

“ *Siste gradum, properante requiescit Mandevil urnâ
Hic humili norunt et monumenta mori.*

Lo! in this Inn of Travellers doth lie
One rich in nothing but a memory :
His name was Sir John Mandeville, content,
Having seen much with a small continent
Tow'rd which he travelled ever since his birth ;
And at last pawn'd his body to the earth,
Which by a statute must in mortgage be
Till a Redeemer come to set it free.”

Towards the close of the last century the sexton found, behind the pillar which bore the half-defaced inscription, a large stone coffin, filled up with a kind of moist lime or plaster, wherein were some bones and part of a skull. It was, of course, inferred that these bones were the relics of the British Ulysses; and for some time they were shown as such to the visitors of the abbey, being esteemed second only in interest to the indisputable skull and bones of Humphrey, the Good Duke of Gloucester, who was so foully murdered in the reign of Henry VI., and buried at St. Alban's. It should seem that this inscription on the pillar has undergone as many variations and alterations as Sir John's own MSS. The letters have been

* *Historical Antiquities of Hertfordshire, &c. &c.*, by Sir Henry Chauncey, Kt., Serjeant-at-Law. Lond. 1700.

recently painted anew, and the lines, as they now stand, may be read by any curious visiter, if, entering the abbey by the western door, he will pause before the second massive column on his left hand. The line of Sir Henry Chauncey,—

“ And at last pawn’d his body to the earth,”

has, we remember, been strangely altered into

“ And at last pawn’d his body for his hearse.”

The introduction of the word *hearse* has led to a small misconception. A smug, knowing official, who at times shows the abbey, tells the gaping visitors that Sir John Mandeville, though so great a traveller, died so poor that his body was pawned in order to raise money to pay for a hearse to carry it to the grave! But old Weever, who ridicules the inhabitants of St. Alban’s for pretending that the modern Ulysses had been buried near the pillar in their abbey (whereas he had seen his tomb and epitaph at Liege), quotes an inscription altogether different from either of the preceding. He says that, in his time, these were the words on the column at the north side of the nave:—

“ All ye that pass by, on this pillar cast eye,

This epitaph read if you can,

’T will tell you a tomb once stood in this room

Of a brave spirited man;

John Mandevil by name, a knight of great fame,

Born in this honour’d town;

Before him was none, that ever was known,

For Travel of so high renown.

As the Knights in the Temple, cross-legged in marble,

In armour, with sword and with shield,

So was this knight grac’d, which Time hath defac’d,

That nothing but Ruins doth yield.

His Travels being done, he shines like the sun,
In heavenly Canaan,
To which blessed place, the Lord of his Grace
Bring us all, man after man."

Certainly no antiquity can be claimed for these jingling rhymes. They smack of the puritanical seventeenth century, which was Weever's own age. Yet whatever may have been this inscription or these inscriptions at various times, we honour the good old St. Albaners for the pertinacity with which they have claimed the grave of their illustrious townsman. Even that learned, sober, and truth-seeking Serjeant-at Law, Sir Henry Chauncey, whose book was published in the first year of the last century, can hardly give up the claim. "Mandeville's writings," he says, "have proved of that great value in foreign parts, that they contend as well for his burial as his birth, and say he died in 1372, and was buried at the Convent of the Williamites at Liege; *but others affirm he was buried in this our town.*"

Besides a variety of MS. copies (all more or less altered by the copyists), the versions and editions of Mandeville's book are numerous, and very unequal in execution. Some of the early editions are excessively inaccurate, mutilated in one chapter, and filled up in the other with matter which the traveller never wrote or dreamed of. It should seem that, being intended for popular books (and in those ages no books were more popular), the printers thought they could not too much fill them with the marvellous. Yet it must be confessed that Sir John had himself a passion for the monstrous and supernatural, and a strong

faith for the incredible, according to the temper and taste of his times ; or, at least, that no MS. copy of his Travels has hitherto been discovered which does not contain much matter which is utterly fabulous, and which must either have been picked up on mere hearsay, or taken upon trust, out of that common stock which had been accumulating ever since the days of Homer. Of Mandeville's zoology, as of that of other travellers of the dark ages, it may safely be said that it hardly contains a monster that is not to be found in Pliny. Sir John only put into a compact shape, and gave universal currency to, a system or series of natural history tales which had obtained credit among the ancient and literate Romans, and the memory of which had almost perished in the illiterate ages which immediately preceded as well as followed the destruction of the empire. That these tales, kept alive by oral tradition, were floating about the shores of the Mediterranean, and in Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and Asia Minor, seems to be sufficiently proved by the fact that these early travellers of different nations, who lived in different ages, or who had no communication with each other, or knowledge of one another's manuscripts, tell many of the said stories with scarcely any variation. Thus we find in Carpini, Rubruquis, Marco Polo, and Oderico da Pordenone, much that is told by Sir John Mandeville.

The MS. in the Cottonian Library, in the British Museum, to which we have referred, and with which we are well acquainted through the medium of a modern printed book (of which more may be said hereafter), is in good, plain English, bating the obsolete and varying orthography. In the

Library of the British Museum* there is also a MS. of the *Travels* in French, a rare and most curious relic, which, in all probability, was written by some monkish copyist while Mandeville was yet living. The text differs, here and there, in meaning, from the Cottonian English MS., but not, as far as we have examined, in any very material points or circumstances. It is abundantly illuminated, or, as we now say, *illustrated*, with drawings, coloured and gilded; and the ingenious, and ingenuous and confiding, limner, being most alive to the traveller's most marvellous and least credible stories, has exhausted his skill in portraying the monsters of earth, air, fire, and water, described in the text. As we turn over the thick, time-browned, truly venerable vellum pages, we find ourselves in a menagerie of the most startling and portentous kind—in a universe of wonders—in the midst of a thickening and still thickening congeries of monsters. Here sprawls a Caliban sort of Ethiopian; he is lying on his back under a scorching sun; he has only one leg, and that is up in the air; but the foot of that leg is so long and so broad, that it serves to shade both body and head from the burning rays of the luminary of day, as the capacious talipot leaf shadows the Cingalese or native of Ceylon. And, according to Mandeville, there is a whole nation who have only one leg with a parasol foot to it, and “who yet be right nimble, and fast to go, by leaping and hopping with the one leg.” Here are men and women with the heads of dogs, though well-favoured and proportioned in other respects. They are but specimens of a whole

* Harleian Collection.

nation or race of dog-headed people, who are described by our modern Ulysses, and who "be right fierce, and talk not as other men, but bark as dogs." And these Cynamolgi, or dog-headed men, are worshipping an idol in the shape of a non-descript animal, which looks like a cross between a ram and a spotted coach-dog. Here we have women of only one breast, and of fierce and martial aspect: these be the Amazons who, if they be of gentle blood, cut away the left breast that they may bear the shield, and, if they be of plebeian blood, cut away the right breast that they may the better shoot with the bow and arrow. Here are marvellously little men and women with faces somewhat resembling monkeys: these be of the Pigmy nation, who scantily measure three spans, who marry when six months old, and who die of old age at eight years; and these small men be the best workmen in silk and cotton, in all manner of ways, that be in the world; and they till no land, and despise big men as we them. And here are depicted marvellously big men, as tall as trees: and these be of the Giants who live in an island of the ocean, and stand thirty feet high without shoes; and beyond this there is another island where the Giants be forty or fifty feet (some do say forty or fifty *cubits*) in altitude; and these Giants be all cannibals, of measureless voracity and fierceness. And here our limner gives us a group composed of one or two of these giants, a ship, and ship's crew; and the giants have taken up the ship between their smaller fingers, and are popping the poor sailors into their mouth to eat them, after the fashion of that truculent giant, who sang in the hearing of that illustrious giant-killer, Jack,

"Fi, Fo! Fum!

I smell the blood of an Englishman!"

Here our monastic artist gives us a man with a perfectly flat face, and here a man and woman with projecting lips, but without any noses: for the text (making flatter the noses of some of the African tribes) saith that there is a nation without any visible nose. Here again we have the lively effigies of a man with a projecting upper lip, which looks like the truncated trunk of an elephant, covering and totally concealing mouth, chin, and neck. Here are men and women without any head at all, but with eyes in their chests, and gasping, semi-lunar mouths in the front of their bellies. Here again be folk that are neither men nor women, but each in himself-herself a mixture of both sexes—veritable hermaphrodites. And here our artist gives us a picture of men that "have beards, as it were cats' tails." He paints us green-faced people and blue-faced people; but that which surpassed his art was to give the transition stage of a people, described by his author, who change from red to black. As we pass from the human form divine to the brute creation we find our limner or author still more creative or inventive. The hippopotamus is turned into a centaur and cannibal; for,—“in the kingdom of Bactria be ypotaims that dwell sometimes on land and sometimes in water, and are half man and half horse, and do feed on men when they can get them.” The fabulous griffin is depicted and described in fearful colours, for—“In this land (Bactria) are many griffins, more than in other places; and some say they have the body before as an eagle and behind as a lion; and it is true, for they are made so: but the griffin hath a

body bigger than eight lions and stronger than a hundred eagles, for certainly he will bear to his nest flying, a horse and a man upon his back."

Elephants, crocodiles, dragons, and serpents assume the most portentous magnitude and alarming ferocity. There are serpents of the sea which annually sail from Ethiopia to India, and which might rival the greatest sea-serpent ever seen by Yankee skipper, or described by Yankee editor. Nay, in one of Mandeville's Indian isles the very snails "be so great that *many* men may lodge in one of their shells as they might do in a little house." Surely the monkish artist must have shuddered at some of his own delineations, and the novices of his convent must have been haunted by them in their sleep.

All these designs of the limner of the fourteenth century are dropped into the text, like wood-blocks in our modern books; and they stand in the midst, or at the beginning or the closing of Mandeville's descriptions.

In the continental libraries there are other MS. copies of the travels quite as curious as this, and with designs or illuminations equally startling.

Upon the happy introduction of the art of printing, when search was made for such books as would sell the best by pleasing the greatest number of people, attention was soon turned to our Ulysses Britannicus. Perhaps the first printed edition was that of Pietro di Cornero, Milan, 1480, in 4to., entitled, 'Tractato delle più maravigliose cose e più notabili che si trovano in le parte del Mondo vedute del Cavaler Johanne da Mandavilla' [Treatise of the most marvellous things and the most notable that are found in the parts of the world

seen by the knight J. M.]. A very curious edition was published at Venice in 1505. It is in the Venetian dialect, and was at one time very popular among the countrymen of Marco Polo or Marco Milione. In its very full title-page Mandeville is designated as "that most strenuous knight" (*strenuissimo cavalier*) "Knight of the Golden Spur" (*à Speron d'Oro*), and native of the city of St. Alban's. A German translation by Otto von Demeringen was printed in 1483. Another German edition, with strange wood-cuts, was published at Strasburg in 1507. The first English edition was printed by Wynkin de Worde, the pupil and successor of Caxton, at Westminster, in 1499. This was a small 8vo. volume, and bore on its title-page, "A lytel Treatise or Book, named John Mandevyll, Knight, born in England, in the town of Saynt Albone, and speaketh of the wayss of the Holy Londe towards Jherusalem, and of Marvyles of Ynde and other dyverse countries." Though at one time in everybody's hands, this is now become an excessively rare book. We have never seen a copy of it. The oldest English printed book of the Travels we have found in the Library of the British Museum, is a small, much abridged, black-letter, bearing date 1589: it is enriched with wood-cuts, the designs of which bear some resemblance to the illuminations in the ancient MS., and are quite as quaint and horrible as those. There is a later English edition bearing the date of 1620, and traces are to be found of several other editions in the catalogues of old libraries. The French translation, which was printed at Lyons by Barnabé Chaussart, and which was several times reprinted in France, has no date; but it probably appeared

early in the sixteenth century. The marvellous book was printed in Spain almost as soon as the Spaniards became acquainted with the use of type. In the Library of the British Museum there is a very curious edition, in folio, with rude wood-cuts, which was published at Alcalá de Henares in 1547. In all these books applause is bestowed upon the enterprise, valour, and *veracity* of the English knight. The best English edition—faulty as it is—is that of London, 1725, 8vo. The editor tells us that he printed from the old Cottonian MS., collating it with seven other MSS., some nearly as old as the author's time, and with the early printed editions. For our extracts we have chiefly used, and shall continue to use, this last edition, only modernizing the orthography—by which simple and allowable process Mandeville's language, as the reader will have seen, becomes perfectly intelligible.

It is, indeed, indisputable, that in most of these editions "the author has been grievously misused, particularly in the orthography of the names of places." * It may also be safely assumed that, in the old MS. copies, some of the most startling and absurd parts of the work are interpolations, monkish ornaments and exaggerations, introduced by the copyists, in the manner we have described in the preceding volume, with relation to the travels of others. But, unless some ancient and original MS. very different from any we possess be discovered, we much doubt whether any degree of industry and ingenuity in an editor could do for our knight of Saint Alban's what Mr. Marsden did for the Venetian merchant Marco Polo. Sir John's

* Retrospective Review.

matter and manner are far more confused than honest Marco's; and his credulity seems everywhere far greater. Judging, as we must, only from such copies of his work and such materials as are in our possession, we should say that his taste was decidedly hyperbolical, that it was his practice to borrow from all manner of sources, and that he introduced into his relations—which are far indeed from bearing throughout the narrative form—many current tales of knight-errantry, miraculous legends, monsters, giants, and devils, *because* they were current in different parts of the world, and he himself believed in them. We doubt whether any skill, labour, and ingenuity could identify with places existing or destroyed, the towns and cities which are set down in such strange and varying orthography in the MSS. and old editions, or satisfactorily explain his course of travel from country to country. What can be shown is—that *all* his accounts are not fabulous, or borrowed, and that his book where most fabulous is exceedingly amusing, and at the same time instructive as to the state of geographical knowledge, and the nature and amount of credulity, in the Middle Ages. There remains, too, the interest attaching to it as one of the earliest specimens of English prose; and, upon the whole matter, we can concur heartily with the writer who has preceded us in the attempt to brighten the fame of Mandeville by making his countrymen better acquainted with his travels.

“ The literature of the middle ages has scarcely a more entertaining and interesting subject; and to an Englishman it is doubly valuable, as establishing the title of his country to claim as its own the first example of the liberal and independent gentleman, travelling over the world

in the disinterested pursuit of knowledge; unsullied in his reputation; honoured and respected wherever he went for his talents and personal accomplishments.”*

No reasonable doubt can now be entertained that he remained for a long space of time with the liberal-minded Soudan or Sultan of Egypt, who was master of all Syria, and kept his court at Damascus. Among other things he relates of that Mahommedan Prince is what here follows:—

“ And therefore shall I tell you what the Soudan told me upon a day, in his chamber. He let voiden out of his chamber all manner of men, lords and others; for he would speak with me in counsel. And there he asked me, how the Christian men governed themselves in our country. And I said, ‘ Right well, thanked be God!’ And he said, ‘ Truly nay, for ye Christian men know not how truly to serve God. Ye should give ensample to the lewd people to do well, and ye give them ensample to do evil. For the Commons, upon Festival days, when they should go to church to serve God, then go they to Taverns, and be there in gluttony all the day and all night, and eat and drink, as beasts that have no reason, and wis not when they have had enow. And also Christian men enforce them to fight, in all manners that they may,—for to fight, and for to deceive one another. And, therewithal, they be so proud that they know not how to be clothed; now long, now short, now straight, now large, now sworded, now daggered, and in all manner of guises. They should be simple, meek, and true, and full of alms-deeds, as JESU was in whom they trow: but they be all the contrary, and ever inclined to the devil and to do evil. And they be so covetous, that for a little silver, they sell their daughters, their sisters, and their own wives, to put them to lechery. And one withdraweth the wife of another, and none of them hold faith to one another, but they defoul the Law that JESUS CHRIST betook them to keep for their salvation. And

* Retrospect. Rev

thus, for their sins, they lost all this land that we now hold.' And I asked him how he knew the state of Christian men? And he answered, that he knew all the state of the commons also, by his messengers that he sent to all lands, in manner as they were merchants in precious stones, or of cloths of gold and of other things, for to know the manner of every country amongst Christian men. And then he called in all the Lords that he made void first out of his chamber; and there he showed me four, that were great Lords in their country, that told me of my country, and of many other Christian countries, as well as if they had been of the same country; and they spake French right well, and the Soudan also, whereof I had great marvel. Alas! that it is great slander to our faith and to our law, when folk that be without true law should reprove us and remember us of our sins! And truly they say sooth. *For the Saracens be good and faithful.* For they keep entirely the commandment of their Holy Book, Alcoran."

Then follows our traveller's quaint account of the giver of the Koran, the Prophet Mahomet:—

"And ye shall understand that Mahomet was born in Arabie, that was first a poor knave that kept camels, that went with merchants for merchandize; and it so befel that he went with the merchants into Egypt. And, in the deserts of Arabie, he went into a chapel, where a hermit dwelt. And when he went into the chapel, that was but a little and a low thing, and had but a little door and a low, then the entrance began to wax so great and so large, and so high, as though it had been of a great minster, or the gate of a palace. And this was the first miracle, the Saracens say, that Mahomet did in his youth. After began he for to wax wise and rich; and he was a great astronomer."

The following is Mandeville's account of the motives which induced Mahomet to interdict the use of wine. A story very like it is still current in the East:—

“ And also Mahomet loved well a good Hermit that dwelled in the desert a mile from Mount Sinai, in the way that men go from Arabie towards Chaldee and towards Inde, one day’s journey from the Sea, where the merchants of Venice come often for merchandize. And so often went Mahomet to this Eremite, that all his men were wroth: for he would gladly hear this Hermit preach, and make his men wake all night: and therefore his men thought to put the Eremite to death: and it so befel upon a night, that Mahomet was drunken of good wine, and he fell asleep; and his men took Mahomet’s sword out of his sheath, while he slept, and therewith they slew this Hermit, and put his sword, all bloody, in his sheath again. And at morrow, when he found the good Hermit dead, he was full sorry and wroth, and would have put his men to death; and they all, with one accord, said that he himself had slain him, when he was drunken, and showed him his own sword all bloody; and he trowed that they had said truth. And then he cursed wine, and all those that drink it. And therefore Saracens that be devout drink no wine: *but some drink it privily.*”

No doubt our English Ulysses had heard this tale from some wandering Arab while travelling with a caravan across the deserts. Not many years ago we ourselves heard its counter-part in the great Khan, Caravanserai, or Inn of Magnesia, in Asia Minor, from a long-bearded Turk, who, after gently reproving us for drinking the forbidden drink, earnestly asked us for some strong waters—some rum or brandy!

In the passage we shall next extract Sir John describes the birth-place of the Saviour, and how it was that roses came into the world.

“ From Ebron men go to Bethlehem, in half a day, for it is but five leagues, and it is a full, fair way, by plains and woods full delectable. Bethlehem is a little city, long and narrow and well walled, and on each side

enclosed with good ditches. And towards the east end of the city, is a full fair Church, and a gracious; and it hath many towers, pinnacles and corners, full strong, and curiously made: and within that Church be forty and four pillars of marble, great and fair. And between the City and the Church is the Field Floridus, that is to say the Field Flowering: Forasmuch as a fair maiden was blamed with wrong, and slandered that she had done fornication, for which cause she was doomed to the death, and to be burned in that field, to the which she was led. And as the fire began to burn about her, she made her prayers to our Lord, as she was not guilty of that thing, that he would help her, and make it to be known of all men, of his merciful grace. And when she had thus said she entered into the fire, and anon was the fire quenched and out: and the brands that were burning became red rosières (rose-trees), and the brands that were not kindled became white rosières, full of white roses. And these were the first rosières and roses, both white and red, that ever any man saw. And thus was this fair maiden saved by the grace of God, and therefore is that field yeleft the Field of God's Flowers; for it is full of roses."

Surely this is a pretty, primitive legend, and prettily and quaintly told. It is redolent of the air of the east and the perfume of the sweetest of all flowers. Hafez, whose song was all of the Rose and Nightingale, might have sung it in Persian verse; and Dan Chaucer, our traveller's contemporary, might have introduced it into his *Canterbury Tales*, or have made another "*Romaunt of the Rose*," about it.

The sullen, awful Dead Sea (or Lake Asphaltites, whose rising waters buried the sinful cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and Adama, and Seboyn, and Segor), which has marvels enough in its real nature, and in the religious traditions connected

with it, was a very favourite theme with all our early travellers in the East, and one upon which they bestowed all their credulity or all their powers of fancy and exaggeration. They blended the terrible denunciations of Scripture with the dark classical painting of Virgil, and superadded to the natural horrors of the place the mephitic deadly vapours and ghostly terrors of *Avernus*.*

Mandeville's description of the Dead Sea, however marvellous, is sober and correct compared to that given by the majority of old travellers. It is simply this:—

“ The Dead Sea departeth the lands of Palestine and of Arabie ; and that Sea lasteth from Soara unto Arabie. The water of that Sea is full bitter and salt ; and if the earth were made moist and wet with that water, it would never bear fruit. And the earth and the land change often its colour. And it casteth out of the water a thing that men clepen Asphalt, also great pieces of the greatness of a horse every day, and from all sides. And from Jerusalem unto that Sea, is two hundred furlongs. That Sea is in length five hundred and eighty furlongs, and in breadth one hundred and fifty furlongs ;† and it is cleped the Dead Sea, for that it runneth not, but is ever unmovable. . . . But some men clepen that Sea the Lake Asphaltidic ; some the Fluv [River] of Devils ; and some the Fluv that is ever stinking. . . . And neither man, beast, nor anything that beareth life, may die in that dead sea ; and that hath been proved

* *Æneid*, book vi.

† Mandeville's measurement is here very moderate, and is probably a near approach to the truth. Pliny makes it 100 English miles long ; Diodorus Siculus and Josephus reduce the length considerably, Josephus stating it at 580 stades, which Mandeville has taken as equal to furlongs : but if, as is probable, Josephus used the Greek stade of 700 to the degree, the length he assigns would be about 56 miles, which is about the truth according to the best authorities.

many times, by men that have deserved to be dead, that have been cast therein three days or four, and they might never die therein ; for it receiveth nothing within it that beareth life. And no man may drink of the water for bitterness. And if a man cast iron therein it will float above. And if men cast a feather therein it will sink to the bottom."

This confusion to our notions of specific gravity proceeds merely from the exaggeration of the physical fact that the waters of the Dead Sea, charged with detritus and volcanic matter in solution, are very dense and heavy in themselves, and consequently very buoyant to objects thrown into them. They are also excessively bitter, pungent, and intolerably nauseous ; asphaltum floats on their surface, and covers the whole extent of the deserted, curse-stricken shores, and the awful lake throws up on the shores pieces of petrified wood and porous stones in a calcined state. Except a space of arid sand at its northern extremity extending along the river Jordan, the lake is enclosed on all sides by huge masses of bare stones and rocky hills, on which nothing will grow but a dwarfish faint-coloured shrub, from which a medicinal balsam is extracted. The deep but narrow valleys which traverse these masses of stone are inclosed by stark, lofty mountains, and the whole presents a dismal and most sombre sight, on which the lightest-hearted traveller cannot gaze without heaviness and sadness.*

It was impossible that Mandeville should omit a

* For recent descriptions of the Dead Sea the reader may be referred to Lord Nugent's 'Lands Classical and Sacred,' forming vols. xeviii. and xcix. of this series ; to the Travels of Captains Irby and Mangles ; to J. L. Stephens's 'Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia Petræa, and the Holy Land ;' and to Dr. Kitto's 'Palestine.'

description of the Dead Sea or Gomorrah apple—that fruit so fair without, and so void and foul within—which had a prescriptive right to insertion in every old account of the lake. Nor could one so fond of the miraculous fail to mention the traditional remains of Lot's lingering wife. Even now the Arabs who dwell in the neighbouring country, conduct the traveller to a pillar coated with asphaltum, which they pretend to be the very pillar of salt into which Lot's wife was transformed. In the course of our own wanderings we knew an adventurous and very worthy man—the skipper of a trading-ship—who had seen the pillar, who entertained no doubt of its identity, and who thought that we—not having seen *that*—had seen nothing. Another erratic Englishman who had been on Mount Ararat, not only assured us that he had seen from a distance the keel and some of the ribs of Noah's Ark on the top of that mountain, but also produced a large copper nail for our admiration, as a nail which had indisputably been taken from the remains of the Ark by an Armenian monk, his host and sometime guide. A fond belief in these things is not yet extinct. We have known old sailors, far too honest and veracious to attempt to describe what they had never seen, who yet believed in nearly every one of the stories told by the travellers of the Middle Ages, and entertained few doubts as to the existence, in some unfrequented parts of the world, of giants, pigmies, herimaphrodites, and all manner of monsters. That these stories, when first promulgated, should have taken a strong hold of the imagination is not surprising, but that the traditions of them should have lasted for so many ages, and have undergone so little change, is at least curious.

Of the Dead Sea apples our knight of St. Albans saith—

“ And there beside grow trees that bear full fair apples, and fair of colour to behold ; but whoso breaketh them or cutteth them in twain, he shall find within them coals and cinders, in token that by the wrath of God the cities and the land were burned and sunk into hell.”

On the subject of Lot's wife he is very brief: —

“ Also, at the right side of that Dead Sea, dwelleth yet the wife of Lot, in likeness of a salt stone ; for that she looked behind her when the cities sunk into hell.”

In speaking of the country “ nigh unto Hebron,” Sir John saith—

“ And *there* is a tree of oak that the Saracens clepen *Dirpe*, that is of Abraham's time, the which Christian men clepen the dry-tree. And they say that it hath been there since the beginning of the world, and was sometime green, and bare leaves unto the time that our Lord died on the cross ; and then it dried, and so did all the trees that were then in the world. And some say that there be here prophecies, that a lord, a prince of the west side of the world, shall win the Land of Promysson [Promise], that is the Holy Land, with help of Christian men ; and he shall do sing a mass under that dry tree, and then the tree shall waxen green and bear both fruit and leaves ; and through that miracle many Saracens and Jews shall be turned to Christian faith. And, therefore, they do great worship thereto, and keepen it full busily [carefully]. And albeit, so that it be dry, nathless it beareth great virtue ; for certes he that hath a little thereof upon him, it relieves him of the falling sickness ; and his horse shall not be foundered : and many other virtues it hath, wherefore men hold it full precious.”

This legend and prophecy endeared Sir John and his book to his devout contemporaries and

successors in all parts of Christendom ; for they still grieved for the loss of Jerusalem, and the overthrow of the kingdom the Crusaders had established in the Holy Land, as for one of the greatest of calamities.

Mandeville's descriptions of Jerusalem and of other places in the Holy Land—the devout longing to see which had first tempted him to leave his own country—are in general sober and rational enough. When he gets into remoter parts of the world his sobriety seems to leave him, or to keep him less constant company. Then it is that he fills his pages with monsters out of Pliny, miracles out of legends, and stories out of old romances. It should, however, be noted, that generally—though not always—when he is about to tell the most improbable of his stories, he prefaces them with, “They sayen,” “Men sayen,” “Folk tell, but I have not seen these things mysel,” &c. His falsities or errors are in good part occasioned by his following other authors, at that time accounted true : his fault is, that he never names his authors or makes any allusion to the books from which he is transcribing. This evil practice was almost universal among writers of his times, and it is but too prevalent in our own ; the difference being that in the Middle Ages the most respectable men did not eschew it, while now it is adopted only by the meanest and most disreputable of literary pirates.

The following story has been traced to that celebrated romance of the Middle Ages, *The History of Melusine*, by John of Arras, who very probably borrowed the incidents from an earlier writer, as Mandeville borrowed from him :—

"From Trapazond,"* saith Sir John, "men go through little Ermonie.† And in that country is an old castle that stands upon a rock, the which is cleped the Castle of the Sparrow-Hawk, that is beyoud the city of Lazays, beside the town of Pharsippa, that belongeth to the lordship of Cruk, that is a good lord and a good Christian man; where men find a sparrow-hawk upon a perch, right fair and right well made, and a fair ladie of fairéó that keepeth it. And who that will wake that sparrow-hawk seven days and seven nights, or, as some men say, only three days and three nights, without company and without sleep, that fair ladie shall give him, when he hath done, the first wish that he will wish of earthly things: and that hath been proved oftentimes. And one time it befel that a king of Ermonie, that was a worthy knight and doughty man, and a noble prince, woke that hawk, and at the end of seven days and seven nights the ladie came to him, and bade him wish; for he had well deserved. And he answered, that he was great lord enow, and well in peace, and had enow of worldly riches; and therefore he would wish none other thing but the love of that fair ladie And she answered him, that he knew not what he asked; and said, that he was a fool to desire that which he might not have; for, she said, that he should not ask but earthly things, and that she was none earthly thing, but a ghostly thing. And the king said he would then ask no other thing. And the ladie made answer, 'Since I may not withdraw you from your lewd courage, I shall give you, without wishing, and to all them that shall come after you, sir king!—ye shall have wars without peace, and always to the ninth degree ye shall be in subjection of your enemies; and ye shall be needy of all goods!' And ever since that time neither the king of Ermonie nor the country hath been in peace; nor have they had goods, but have been alway under tribute of the Saracens.

"The son of a poor man woke that hawk, and wished

* Trebizond.

† The Lesser Armenia.

that he might prosper well, and be happy in merchandize. And the ladie granted it : and he became the most rich and most famous merchant that might be on sea or on earth ; and he waxen so rich that he knew not the thousandth part of that he had : and he was wiser in wishing than the king."

However little the Sparrow-Hawk, and the fair Ladie that was "none earthly thing, but a ghostly thing," may have had to do with it, it is matter of history that the Christian Kings of Armenia, from the first incursions of the Mohammedanized Arabs, Syrians and Persians in the ninth century, down to the utter subversion of their throne in the thirteenth, were involved in constant trouble, misfortune, and woe.

It was an article of belief throughout Christendom in these ages that the Terrestrial Paradise existed in some part of the Eastern world, unchanged by the convulsions and revolutions of nature, unsullied by the sins of mankind, unaltered since the innocent and blissful time when our first parents dwelt there, and talked face to face with the Creator in the garden. Here, according to some of the legends, the Phoenix had birth and a constant residence. Centuries before the age of Mandeville some visions of this "bright, particular" spot, illuminated the fancy of our Anglo-Saxon poets.

"Oft have I heard that eastward, far from hence,
The noblest land that song may tell of, lies.

Beauteous, in sooth, that land beneath the sky
Spreads its green woodlands : there, nor rain nor snow,
Nor the frost's fetters, nor the blast of fire,
Nor hail swift falling, nor the hoary rime,
Nor the sun's parching heat, nor winter's cold,

May aught intrude ; but firm amid the wave,
Still clad in verdure, stands that blessed realm." *

The passage quoted is freely rendered from an old Anglo-Saxon paraphrase of the 'Phoenix,' a Latin poem attributed by some to Lactantius, the celebrated Latin father, who flourished at the beginning of the fourth century. The original poem begins,

"Est locus in primo felix Oriente remotus."

It was the *Æthiopia* of Homer and Herodotus, the happy *Hyperboræan* region of Virgil ; but, unlike these paradises of heathenese, it was uninhabited of men ; nor might mortal man enter therein until the Millennium of the Saints. Some of the old missionary travellers, however, pretended that they had had a far off glimpse—a "Pisgah view,"—of the spot, and of the four great rivers which, according to an early and unalterable Christian tradition, flowed thence, to fertilize the four corners of the earth. Our Knight of St. Alban's is more modest and reverential.

"Of Paradise," saith Sir John, "ne can not I speak properly ; for I was not there. It is far beyond ; and that forthinketh me : and also I was not worthy. But what I have heard say of wise men beyond, I shall tell you with good will. Paradise Terrestre, as wise men say, is the highest place of earth, that is, in all the world ; and it is so high that it toucheth nigh to the circle of the moon . . . For it is so high that the flood of Noah ne might not come to it ; albeit it did cover all the earth of the world, all about, and aboven and beneath, save Paradise alone. And this Paradise is enclosed all about with a wall, and men wis not whercof it is ; for the

* John Josias Conybeare, 'Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Poetry.'

walls be covered all over with moss, as it seemeth. And it seemeth not that the wall is stone of nature. And that wall stretcheth from the south to the north, and it hath not but one entry, that is closed with fire burning; so that no man that is mortal ne dare not enter."

So Milton, when he conducts Adam and Eve to the gate, and to the unknown regions beyond the gate.

" High in front advanc'd
The brandished sword of God before them blaz'd,
Fierce as a comet; which with torrid heat,
And vapour as the Libyan air adust,
Began to parch that temperate clime; whereat
In either hand the hast'ning angel caught
Our ling'ring parents, and to th' eastern gate
Led them direct, and down the cliff as fast
To the subjected plain; then disappear'd.
They, looking back, all th' eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
Wav'd over by that flaming brand; the gate
With dreadful faces throng'd, and fiery arms."

Mandeville did not forget the four rivers. "And in the most high place of Paradie," he saith, "even in the middle place, is a well that casteth out the Four Floods, that run by divers lands."

Travelling through "Ermonie," or Armenia, Sir John sees Mount Ararat, but does not ascend it.

"Know ye that there is another great hill that men clepen Ararathe; but the Jews clepen it Tancez; whereon Noah's ship rested; and it is yet upon that mountain, and men may see it afar off in clear weather: and that mountain is *seven miles high*. And some men do say that they have seen and touched the ship, and put their fingers in the parts where the fiend went out when that Noah said *Benedicite*. But they that sayen such words sayen their will; for a man may not go up the

mountain (for great plenty of snow that is always on that mountain) neither summer ne winter; so that no man may go up there, ne never man did since the time of Noah, save a monk, that, by the grace of God, brought one of the planks down, that is in the Minster at the foot of the mountain."

This, too, compared with other early accounts of Mount Ararat, is sober and modest. We must, of course, deduct largely from Sir John's elevation of *seven miles*. The real height of that remarkable volcanic mountain has been settled by Parrot, a recent Russian traveller, who succeeded in making the ascent, at 17,260 English feet above the level of the sea. Thus it is 6389 feet higher than *Ætna*, 4792 feet higher than the volcanic peak of *Teneriffe*, and exceeds by 1528 feet *Mont Blanc*, the point of greatest elevation in Europe. It does not, however, ascend to this great height from its base, the broad, flat, table-land of Armenia, on which it stands, being from 5000 to 7000 feet above the level of the sea. It has two conical peaks, far apart from each other, the loftier one rising far above the limit of eternal snow. When seen from afar and in certain positions, the summit has a striking resemblance to a ship. The whole country round was and is full of traditionary stories about Noah's Ark and the Flood. The Christian Armenians call Ararat the Mountain of the Ark; the Mohammedan Persians the Mountain of Noah. At Erivan they pretend to show the spot where Noah first planted the vine. In a church the Armenian monks still show a cross, which, they affirm, was made, many centuries ago, out of a plank of the Ark. The holy brother who secured that inesti-

mable treasure, when nearly exhausted in his effort, was aided by an angel.*

Sir John and some of his "fellows" go through the Valley Perilous, in spite of the devil.

" Deep the gulf that hides the dead ;
Long and dark the way they tread." †

He has nearly a whole chapter about the valley, which he enriches with new terrors, and renders far more awful than friar Odorico da Pordenone had left it. The chapter is headed—"Of the Devil's Head in the Valley Perilous, and of the Customs of Folk in divers Isles that be about, in the Lordship of Prester John." The chapter opens geographically: but it would be a desperate exercise of the intellect to adjust, or to attempt to explain, his geography.

"By side the isle of Mestorak, upon the left side, nigh to the river of Plison, is a marvellous thing. There is a vale between the mountains that dureth nigh to four miles, and some call it the Vale Enchanted, and some call it the Vale of Devils, and some call it the Vale Perilous. In this vale hear men often time great tempests and thunders, and great murmurs and noises, all days and nights; and great noise, as it were sound of tabors, and of nakeres, and trumpets, as though it were a great feast. This vale is full of devils, and hath been alway; and men say that it is one of the entries of Hell.

"In that valley is great plenty of gold and silver; wherefore many misbelieving men, and many Christian men also, gone in often time for to have of the treasure

* See Penny Cyclopædia, art. 'Ararat.'

† John Josias Conybeare, 'Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Poetry.'

that there is; but few come out again, for they be all anon strangled of devils.

“ And, in mid place of the valley, under a rock, is the head and the visage of a devil, bodily, full horrid, and dreadful to see; and it showeth not but the head to the shoulders. But there is no man in the world, Christian man ne other, but that he would be adread for to behold it, and that it would seem to him to die for dread; so is it hideous for to behold. For he beholdeth every man so sharply, with dreadful eyes, that be evermore moving and sparkling as fire, and chaungeth and stirreth so often, in divers manner, with so horrible countenance, that no man dare not nigh towards him. And from him cometh out smoke and stink and fire, and so much abomination that no man may then endure.

“ But the *good* Christian men that be stable in the faith enter well without peril. For they will first shrive them and mark them with the token of the Holy Cross; so that the fiends ne have no power over them. But, albeit, that they may be without peril, yet, nathelless, be they not without dread, when that they see the devils visibly and bodily all about them, that make full many assaults and menaces in air and in earth, and aghast them with strokes of thunder blasts and tempests. And the more dread is that God will take vengeance then, if that man have misdane against his will. And ye shall understand that when my fellows and I were in that valley, we were in great thought whether that we durst put our bodies in adventure to go on or no in the protection of God. And some of our fellows agreed to enter, and some not. * So there were with us two worthy men, friars Minorite, that were of Lombardy, that said that, if any man of us would enter, they would go in with us. And when they had said so, upon the gracious trust of God and of them, we did sing mass, and made every man to be shriven and houselled; and then we did enter, *fourteen* of us. But, at our going out, we were but *nine*; and, also, we wist never whether our fellows were lost, or else turned again for dread; but we never saw them

after ; and they were, *two* men of Greece and *three* of Spain. And our other fellows that would not go in with us, they went by another coste [side] to be before us, and so they were.

“ And thus we passed the Perilous Valley, and found therein gold and silver, and precious stones, and rich jewels in great plenty, both here and there, as us seemed ; but whether that it was as seemed, I wot not : for I touched none, because that the devils be so subtle to make a thing seem otherwise than it is, for to deceive mankind ; and therefore I touched none ; and, also, that I would not be put out of my devotion : for I was more devout than ever I was before or after, and all for the dread of fiends, that I saw in divers figures ; and also for the great multitude of dead bodies that I saw there lying by the way, by all the valley, as though there had been a battle between two kings, and the mightiest of the country, and that the greater part had been discomfited and slain. And I trow that scarcely should any country have so much people within it as lay slain in that valley, as us bethought ; the which was an hideous sight to see. And I marvelled much that there were so many, and the bodies all whole, without rotting. But I trow that fiends made them seem to be so whole without rotting : for it might not be in mine avys [in my opinion] that so many should have entered so newly, ne so many newly slain without stinking and rotting. And many of them were in the habit of Christian men ; but I trow well that they were of such as went in for covetousness of the treasure, and had overmuch feebleness of faith, so that their hearts might not endure in their belief for dread. And therefore were we the more devout a great deal ; and yet we were cast down and beaten down many times to the hard earth by winds, and thunders, and tempest : but evermore God of his grace helped us, and so we passed that perilous valley without peril and without encumbrance. Thanked be Almighty God.”

This is a fine specimen of the thoroughly ro-

mantic of travel ! Like the good monk of Pordenone, our Knight of Saint Alban's is made to speak as an eye and ear witness. We suspect, however, that in Mandeville's own original manuscript there was an occasional "men sayen," and that the pronouns *I* and *we* were introduced by the monkish copyists in order to make the story more striking, and to give it the greater appearance of authenticity. Both the Friar and the Knight have, indeed, been sadly misused by their copyists and editors. No two MSS. and no two printed editions of Mandeville agree at all closely in their accounts of the Perilous Valley. Where we see so many discrepancies we may very fairly conjecture that more would appear if we could compare even the oldest MS. copy with the real original. We do not, however, doubt that Mandeville's own description was awful enough.

It has been already said that, *ab origine*, the story of the Fearful Valley was merely an exaggerated account of the retreat of some desperate band of robbers ; and that a similar narrative is part of the staple of the professional, itinerant story-tellers of the East. Without going too long in pursuit of a dark shadow, or without attempting to fix the positive origin of the story, I may point out a few of the elements or materials out of which it may have been composed.

The lofty mountains of Asia Minor, as well as the more stupendous ranges of the Hindu-Kush, have, apparently from the remotest times, given shelter to hordes of fierce robbers. The long, deep, narrow valleys which open from some of these mountains are, by nature, awful, and subject to all manner of meteorological phenomena. In them

the thunder peals louder and more frequently than elsewhere; in them the winds sound like thunder. Many of them are so profound that the noon-day sun merely shines on the upper sides without ever reaching the bottom of the abyss, where, for the most part, is some brawling river or mountain-torrent. Without any extraneous aid, these valleys strike awe to the heart.

A gigantic style of rock-sculpture, rude, but terrible, the invention of a people who were ancient when the Greeks were modern, and in their very infancy as a nation, appears at one time to have prevailed throughout the length and breadth of Asia. Many specimens of it are still to be found among the mountains and mountain-passes of Asia Minor. In some places the whole face of a lofty and broad rock is covered with figures in the boldest of alto-relievo, and that seem starting from the mountain's side, and about to descend upon the traveller who is passing beneath. Much more frequently it is a single figure, of enormous dimensions, that stands out from the face of the rock, to threaten and frown across the pass or valley. There is a stupendous figure of this sort, between the ancient cities of Sardes and Magnesia, on the abrupt rocky face which Mount Sipylus presents to the valley of the Hermus. The first time that I rode under that stone giant, in the dusk of evening, the effigies struck me with an involuntary awe. But there is an open champagne country in front of this figure; and a high road, cheerful, though not much frequented, runs almost close under the statue. The effect is therefore less than it would be in another situation. But, in the same district, I was told of another grim statue cut on the face of a rock, at

the mouth or entrance to a narrow, gloomy pass in the mountains, which was so horribly grim, and starch, and menacing, that none could pass it without shuddering, and no man but a brave one could pass it at all and get through the dark defile beyond it. The Greeks of the little town of Nymphé, who described to me this monstrous piece of sculpture, seemed to shudder as they spoke of it. I was deterred from visiting the spot and judging of the figure with mine own eyes, because the Samiote pirates, issuing from their mountainous island, near the main, were making incursions, in that direction, far up the country, plundering and murdering some of the Turks, and carrying off others to be kept for ransom. That very forenoon I had found a poor old Turk lying murdered in a streamlet, not far from the town. The local tradition was that the dismal glen was never free either of robbers or of devils!

In India there are astounding specimens of this rock-sculpture, mixed with what we may call rock-architecture. At Mahâbalipûr a whole mountain side has been cut by the hand of man into fantastic and startling forms. Here towers a huge pagoda, of one solid stone, cut out of the rock; here a huge surface juts out from the side of the hill, and from this surface projects, in very bold relief, a most numerous group of human figures, of colossal dimensions, each of them in commanding or menacing attitude, or with weapons, or other insignia; and here, again, higher up the hill, are immense figures of Hindu idols, awfully grotesque—ugly as sin, terrible as death. But these stupendous works are surpassed by others about a mile and a half to the south of the hill. *There* are an elephant, full

as large as life, and a fierce lion much larger than the natural size, both hewn out of one solid stone; and numerous other rocks have been made to embody wild animals, warriors, gods, and demons.* Some dark valley, with terrific sculpture of this sort, and occupied by some ferocious band of robbers, may very well have been the original type of the Valley Perilous of our old travellers. The monstrous creations of the Hindu mythology, and the accounts given by native Indians of idols and other statues, deluded the ancient Greeks, the companions or followers of Alexander the Great, and led them to describe as living things what were merely the extravagant works of man.†

In the ruins of Mahâbalipûr the works of imagery and sculpture crowd so thick upon the eye, that they may be considered as having suggested or favoured the idea of a petrified city‡—another stock notion with our early travellers, who testify to having seen, in various parts of the world, some majestic town, with all its inhabitants and everything in it or about it turned into stone by reason of the great wickedness of the people. There is, we believe, hardly any story, however extravagant, told by these simple and credulous explorers, but may be traced to some real thing or circumstance—to some monstrous work of art, or some inexplicable phenomenon of nature—of which they have been informed less by their own senses and actual observation, than by the hearsay accounts of figurative and exaggerative natives.

The Valley Perilous, like all their other marvels, became more and more strange, terrible and

* Chambers, in *Asiatic Researches*.

† See vol. i. p. 19. ‡ Chambers, in *Asiatic Researches*.

vast, as their travels passed under the hands of successive copyists. Mandeville, as we have seen, sets down the length of the valley at less than four miles. Friar Odorico, in the account we have quoted, sets it down moderately at *seven or eight* miles. But, in one of the MSS. followed by Ramusio, the valley is lengthened to *four hundred and eighty miles!* This is but one more out of a thousand instances of the fidelity with which some of the monkish transcribers and earliest printers performed their office.

It is beyond this valley that Sir John places his "Great Isle, where the folk be great giants of twenty-eight feet, or of thirty feet long, and eat men, as men sayen."

"Into that isle dare no man gladly enter; and if the giants see a ship and men therein, anon they enter into the sea for to take them . . . And men have seen many times those giants take men in the sea out of their ships and bring them to land, two in one hand and two in another, eating them, going, all raw and all quick."

Mandeville has, certainly, rather more than the ordinary quantity of horrible stories about cannibals and cannibalism; and his Illuminator or Illustrator in the Harleian MS. puts out his strength in delineating these horrors. The monkish artist, besides the giants eating the mariners as we would eat shrimps, gives two glorious scenes where cannibals are cutting up and carving human bodies with infinite glee and gusto.

Among the pleasanter of his natural history stories are, an account of a marvellous tree, the fruits of which are turned into birds and eaten by the people; and a description of a glorious river, which hath its source, in Paradise, very near the

moon, and which floweth not with water, but with dazzling gems and most precious stones.

He correctly relates the method by which the people of Egypt have dispensed with incubation.

“ And there is a common house in that city [Cairo] that is all full of small furnaces or ovens ; and thither bring the women of that town their eggs of hens, of geese, and of ducks, for to be put in those ovens. And they that keep that house cover them with heat of horse-dung, without hen, goose, or duck, or any other fowl ; and at the end of three weeks, or of a month, they come again, and take their hatched chickens, and nourish them and bring them up : so that all the country is full of them. And so men do there both winter and summer.”

His account of the splendours of the Court of the “ Great Kane ” (the Grand Khan or Emperor of the Mongul Tartars), though somewhat startling in its details, is, on the whole, reconcileable to fact. He gives a tolerably correct account of the *Suttee* or Widow-burning among the Hindus, adding some attendant circumstances which had not been noticed by preceding travellers. Thus, he says that the sacrifice must be voluntary ; that no force must be used to drive the widow to the funeral pyre ; but that the widow that refuses to be burned with the dead body of her husband is thenceforward a dishonoured woman.

“ And if she love more to live with her children than for to die with her husband, men hold her for false and cursed ; ne she shall never be loved ne trusted of the people.”

Immediately after this bit of sober truth we find a bold dash of the fabulous and ridiculous.

“ In that country [India] the women drink wine, and

the men not; and the women shave their beards, and the men not.

* Sir John has a propensity for turning great continental countries into islands. Thus he makes a hugeous isle—"a good isle and a great kingdom"—of Cathay or China. Yet he is correct in describing two peculiar usages of the Chinese, which no European traveller, before him, had taken notice of.

"For the noblesse of that country is to have very long nails to the fingers, and to make them grow alway to be as long as they may. And there be many great men in that country that have their nails so long that they caviroon all the hand; and that is a great noblesse.

"And the noblesse of the women is for to have small feet and little; and, therefore, anon as they be born, they let bind their feet so straight that they may not grow half as nature would."

In one of his great Isles of the Indian Ocean, no alliance, compact, or treaty between man and man is said to be binding unless by an interchange and libation of blood.

"The accord or the alliance is nought worth, nor shall it be to the reproof of a man to break the alliance and accord unless each have drunk of the blood of the other."

Now, we learn from recent voyages that this custom prevails to this day in Borneo; and that especially when a prince or chief adopts a stranger into his family or tribe, a vein of each is opened, and, while the prince drinks the stranger's blood, the stranger drinks the prince's.

Many more instances of his truthfulness, and, perhaps, still more of his fabulousness or credulity, might easily be quoted; but enough has been done to convey to the reader a tolerably correct notion of Sir John de Mandeville and his Travels.

CHAPTER III.

BUT even in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries—which were far indeed from being such dark ages as it became the fashion to consider them in a vain and unreflecting period—there were other travellers besides missionary monks; and some of the monks themselves were impelled to their course of arduous adventure by a pure love and enthusiasm for knowledge. “At this time,” says the judicious Tiraboschi, “the number of travellers was notably increased. Some of these distant journeys were undertaken to convert the Mohammedans and idolators, but others proceeded from the laudable curiosity of seeing new and marvellous things, and of investigating the laws and order of nature.”*

Andalone del Nero, a Genoese, and one of the most celebrated astronomers of his time, travelled into the East for the purpose of cultivating the science to which he had devoted the greater part of his life. He flourished about 1330, and was, in all probability, travelling in the East at the same time as Sir John Mandeville. Boccaccio, who was not only his contemporary, but also his friend and pupil, says that to penetrate farther in his astronomical studies he went travelling over almost the whole world—*cum universum pede Orbem sub quocumque horizonte peragrasset*.† The same learned and laborious scholar, who is now known

* Storia della Letteratura Italiana.

† De Genealogia Deorum, lib. xv

to the generality of readers only as a novelist, makes frequent and very grateful mention of Andalone, calling him his venerable master. In addressing Robert of Anjou, the enlightened King of Naples, at whose court all men of literature and science found a welcome and a liberal patronage, Boccaccio says,—

“ I have often cited that noble and venerable old man Andalone del Nero, Genoese, my revered master, who is well known to thee, oh! best of kings, for his prudence, for the gravity of his manners, and the knowledge he had of the stars. Thou thyself hast seen that he not only taught us to know the movements of the planets with rules transmitted to us by our ancestors, which we commonly use; but that, having travelled nearly all through the world, he arrived to know by the experience of his own eyes that which we before only knew by hearsay.”

But nearly half a century before the time of Boccaccio there must have been some unnamed and altogether unknown precursor of Andalone, and his astronomical observations must then have been imparted to Dante, for otherwise that awful and immortal Florentine could not have so accurately described the constellation of the South Pole.

Dante had a clear notion of the globe shape of the earth. In the cosmogony of his terrible poem, he passes through the centre of the great globe, from the northern to the southern hemisphere, by means of a dreary tunnel: his *Inferno*, or Hell, is within the earth's centre; but his *Purgatorio*, where the souls of the departed are purified and prepared for the immortal bliss of Paradise, lies on the earth's surface, in the southern hemisphere, and is lighted up by the sun by day, and shone upon by the bright stars of that hemisphere by night: save

the single great island, or Mount of Purgatory, the whole of the southern hemisphere is submerged, and has been under water ever since the Deluge. This Mount of Purgatory was, before the transgression of Adam and Eve, the terrestrial paradise; it had never been inhabited since the time of our first parents; and, therefore, the constellation of the Cross, which points to the southern pole, had never been seen except by "the first people:"—

"Non viste mai fuor ch' alla prima gente."

The Mount of Purgatory is placed at the antipodes of Jerusalem. In emerging from the bowels of the earth to stand erect at the antipodes, Dante shows a knowledge of the principle of gravitation, for he describes a change in the position of his body, by which his head is upward instead of being downward, as it must have been if he had kept in the same position in which he had threaded the earth-perforating tunnel. Standing under the glowing firmament of the South, at the foot of the Mount of Purgatory, the divine poet has his face turned to the East, and consequently the southern pole on his right hand; and, turning in that direction, he perceives the *four* stars of the Cross, the most remarkable constellation of that hemisphere, which, many years after Dante's death, filled with rapturous astonishment the first Portuguese navigators that crossed the line.

"Lo bel pianeta* che ad amar conforta
Faceva tutto rider l'Oriente,
Velando i Pesci† ch' erano in sua scorta.
I' mi volsi à man destra, e posì mente

* Venus, or the morning star.

† Constellation of Pisces.

All'altro polo, e viddi quattro stelle
 Non viste mai fuor ch' alla prima gente.
 Goder pareva il ciel di lor fiammelle.
 O! Settentrional, vedovo sito,
 Poichè privato se' di mirar quelle!
 Com' io dal loro sguardo fui partito,
 Un poco mi volgendo all' altro polo
 Là onde'l Carro* era già sparito
 Vidi presso di me un veglio solo." †

"The lovely star, which warms the heart to love,
 Made all the golden Orient laugh with bliss,
 Veiling the Pisces, who attendant rove;
 When to the right I turned mine eye and mind,
 And there beheld four planets bright,—I wis,
 Ne'er seen save by the parents of mankind:—
 Heaven seem'd all joyous with their lustrous kiss:
 O! northern region, widow'd thou art,
 In being exiled from a sight like this!
 When from those radiant stars I turned me back
 To gaze awhile towards the other pole,
 No more I saw old Bootes, but, alack!
 Near me beheld an aged man and sole."

Unless Dante derived this knowledge of the constellation of the Cross from some writer of antiquity—which is not very probable considering the very limited number of classical authors who had been restored to light in his time—he must have obtained it from some recent traveller who had crossed the line and gazed upon the stars of the southern hemisphere. In many other passages of his marvellous poem the old Florentine displays an amount of physical, geographical, and other sciences which is scarcely consistent with the notions we entertain of the state of knowledge in

* Bootes, or Charles's Wain, the constellation comprising the N. Pole Star.

† Purgatorio, canto i.

the beginning of the fourteenth century. Marco Polo, who had lived so long in the southern hemisphere, and had so often steered by the light of the Cross, was quite early enough, in point of date, to have imparted information to the great Florentine; but, unluckily, the old Venetian appears to have been no star-gazer; and, although he devotes a chapter to the *astrologers* of Kambalu, in the service of Kublai Khan, he says nothing of astronomy, and never alludes to any of the stars or constellations of the South. Yet Marco may have communicated in conversation much more than he ever wrote or dictated; and it is very possible that in the course of the years which intervened between his return to Venice and his death, he may have been personally acquainted with the exiled and wandering Ghibelline poet. From 1308 to 1310 Dante resided at Verona, not many miles from Venice, which was then the residence of honest Marco.

But it is time to return to the far-travelled Genoese astronomer.

Boccaccio further says that Andalone ought to be held in astronomy what Cicero was in eloquence and Virgil in poetry; and he mentions some of his astronomical works as being then in existence. Except in these brief allusions we possess no knowledge of the indefatigable and courageous Genoese. We know not what was his profession. If he had belonged to any of the religious order, Boccaccio would not have failed to mention the fact, nor would the laborious historians and biographers of those orders have failed to collect and preserve some particulars about so remarkable a man. Nothing has been discovered to throw any light on the course of his travels or on their duration, or

on the means which he had for travelling so far. It is not even known when or where he died. One of his works on the astrolabe was edited and published at Parma in 1475. The rest of his manuscripts lay buried in libraries which have since been broken up and dispersed ; and they seem now to be altogether unknown. It is reported—but upon no contemporary authority —that this old astronomical traveller was a poet, and that he translated from Greek into Latin one book of the history of the Holy Wars, written by a patriarch of Constantinople.

Nearly at the same time that Andalone del Nero made his scientific journeys, a Roman nobleman of the highest rank went into the East in the pursuit of knowledge and out of his love of travelling and adventure. This was Giovanni Colonna, surnamed of San Vito, a bosom friend of the poet Petrarca. His powerful and ancient family, which traced its origin back to the time of the imperial Cæsars, and which held in almost independent sovereignty a large portion of the Roman States, became involved in a mortal struggle with pope Boniface VIII., who was not incorrectly described by Gibbon as the most implacable of mankind. After a long war the Colonne were vanquished by Boniface, their numerous castles were stormed and taken, or were treacherously given up to the troops of the pope who figured as crusaders engaged in a Holy War, and the ploughshare was driven over the ruins of Palestrina, their principal residence and stronghold. The six brothers of the noble house fled from Italy in disguise to wander over Europe in search of friends or of enemies to the pope. Two of these brothers were cardinals, and

one of them, or perhaps both, had violently opposed the election of Boniface. There was also an old uncle, Sciarra Colonna, and he, together with everybody that bore the hated name, was compelled to fly. This Sciarra hid himself for some time among the woods and morasses which lie near the mouth of the Tiber, and on escaping from that hiding-place it was his hard fortune to be captured by pirates. The rest of the noble fugitives had many disastrous adventures; but they were all bold men, with a firmness of character quite accordant with their armorial bearings, the two solid columns, and their family motto of *SEMPER IMMOTA*. When Stephano, the eldest of the brotherhood, was asked in his helpless and fugitive condition, "where is now your fortress?" he laid his hand on his heart, and said "Here!"

It is not clear whether the Eastern traveller Giovanni Colonna San Vito was one of the brothers or only the cousin of this sublime Stephano; but it is quite certain he began his peregrinations in the East at the time of this universal proscription of the family, which happened about the year 1298. Instead of travelling to the different courts of Europe to be a petitioner for aid, he packed up such money and effects as he had saved out of the general ruin, and crossed the Mediterranean to Egypt or to Palestine. His was a highly cultivated mind, he being, according to his friend Petrarca (the best living judge of such merits), well read in the best authors, and remarkably well acquainted with history. This appears from various letters which that great poet and scholar wrote to him at a later and happier period. In one of these letters Petrarca dwells with delight

on the days when he and Giovanni Colonna had been used to wander together about Rome, examining the monuments of antiquity and learnedly arguing thereupon.* It is deeply to be regretted that nothing remains of so enlightened and tasteful a traveller. The descriptions of a gentleman and scholar and a man of the world like Giovanni Colonna, would have been far otherwise valuable than those generally left us by the monkish travellers, whose Apostolic or missionary zeal was not always associated with a faculty for observation or a felicity in description. It is scarcely to be credited that the noble Colonna did not keep some record of his distant and difficult journeys; but not a line of any such document has ever been discovered; and the little that is known as to the direction of his travels is gathered out of one of the letters which Petrarca afterwards addressed to him. About the year 1331, when the Colonna family had been triumphantly restored to their power and possessions, the traveller was labouring under a bad attack of the gout, and the poet wrote to console him in his sufferings.

“Remember, O father,” says Petrarca, “the journeys undertaken in thy youth, and the time when thy soul was intolerant of repose. Thou wilt then see that this gout is as necessary to thee as a bridle to an impatient steed. Perhaps it would suit me also, in order that I might for once learn how to rest myself and to live alone with myself; but thou certainly hast more need of it than any other man whatsoever. But for it thou wouldst yet have gone beyond the limits of our habitable zone—thou wouldst have reached the antipodes; and that reason, which yet rules thee in everything else, would never

* Famil. Lib. vi. ep. 2.

have been able to check thee in this But only see the good providence of God. The gout has not surprised thee in Persia, nor in Arabia, nor in Egypt, nor in any of those remote provinces, in which thou didst once roam for thy pleasure, even as if thou hadst been in thine own villa; but it has fallen upon thee after thy return, sound and robust, and after innumerable travels, which once seemed to me would never have had an end; and it hath taken thee by the foot in thine own most pleasant estates, to tell thee that thou must travel no more."

Again we must deplore that no accounts remain of the journeys and adventures of this illustrious traveller, whose courage and perseverance must have been equal to his enlightenment. The family spirit of the old Colonne would have carried him forward where others hesitated and turned back.

His friend Petrarca was himself a traveller of no mean repute. For the mere love of travelling and of knowledge, the poet visited many parts of Europe, and at one time he seriously contemplated a voyage to the East. He beautifully describes in his familiar epistles, which, though seldom read, abound in interesting matter, a journey he made in France and Germany in the year 1330. In one of these letters, in which his patriotism or his love of his native soil is simply and forcibly expressed, he says,—

"I have recently travelled through the countries of the Gauls, not upon any business, but solely through an avidity to see, and a certain juvenile ardour. I advanced to the banks of the Rhine and into Germany, attentively observing the manners and customs of men, enjoying the sight of countries to me unknown, and comparing everything with that which is in our own country: and although I have seen many magnificent things, I do not

grieve for having been born in Italy: on the contrary, to say the truth, the farther I travelled, the more I admired mine own native land."

At the distance of four centuries and a half the poet Alfieri entertained much the same feeling, saying that, after having visited all the countries of Europe, the only ones he cared to see again were his native country, Italy, which Nature had made most beautiful; and England, where the industry of man and good and free government had done their utmost. Petrarca describes Lyons, Paris, Ghent, Liege, Aix-la-Chapelle, Cologne, and other cities, and in a style which shows how well qualified he was to write an admirable book of travels. In another place he talks rather vaguely of having coasted Spain and reached England. But we believe that if the poet ever saw our island at all, it was merely in a glimpse from the opposite French coast. He tells us that he was deterred from going to the Holy Land by the length of the voyage, and by the cruel remembrance of the inconveniences and dangers he had already suffered at sea. But he gave to the friend to whom he was to have been a travelling companion, a handbook or itinerary of Syria, which he had carefully compiled from books, from the accounts of preceding travellers, and from the fund of general knowledge with which his capacious and elegant mind was enriched. This '*Itinerarium Syriacum*' contained all the remarkable places which his friend ought to visit. It is a remarkable piece of geography, archæology, and history all commingled, and is entitled to the attention of all who would critically examine the life of Petrarca and the history of the progress of geo-

graphical knowledge.* It appears to have been the work which Tasso consulted in composing his 'Gerusalemme Liberata.' If Petrarca had gone to the East we should have had a far more glowing picture of these countries as they were in the fourteenth century than any that we now possess. None of the Crusaders or early travellers had a tithe of his scholarship and eloquence.

* As Tiraboschi remarks, it is curious that that laborious and voluminous biographer of Petrarca, the Abbé de Sade, should never so much as name or allude to this Eastern Itinerary.

CHAPTER IV.

PILGRIMAGES to the Holy Land, though often interrupted, or rendered perilous, not less by the wars among the Christians of Europe, than by the intolerance and fierceness of the Mohammedans in Asia, continued to be very frequent. Nor was the scheme altogether abandoned of making a new Crusade of all the nations of Christendom, and re-conquering Jerusalem and the whole of Palestine, Syria, and Egypt.

Nearly a century after the first departure of Sir John Mandeville for the East, a worthy esquire of good name and lineage, girded up his loins for the Holy City, being resolved to perform the pilgrimage like a good Christian of the older times, and to collect such local information as might facilitate the march of the European host, and the expulsion of the Moslem from the Land of Promise; or at the very least serve as a guide-book to other noble pilgrims. This traveller was no less a personage than Bertrandon de la Brocquière, Esquire-Carver (*premier écuyer-tranchant*) to Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy. But let him speak for himself, as he does, with all due pomp and emphasis, in his own preface:—

“ To animate and inflame the hearts of such noble men as are desirous of seeing the world ;

“ And, by order and commandment of the most high, most puissant, and my most redoubted Lord, Philip, by the grace of God Duke of Burgundy, Lorraine, Bra-

bant, and Limbourg, Count of Flanders, Artois, and Burgundy, Palatine of Hainault, Holland, Zealand, and Namur, Marquis of the Holy Empire, Lord of Friesland, Salins, and Mechlin ;

“ I, Bertrandon de la Brocquière, native of the duchy of Guienne, Lord of Vieux-Chateau, Counsellor, and First Esquire-Carver of my said most redoubted Lord ;

“ After having recollected, as best I could, every event, and what I had reduced to writing in a little book, have now fairly written out this account of my short travels ;

“ In order that if any king or Christian princes should wish to undertake the conquest of Jerusalem, and lead thither an army overland, or if any noble men should wish to travel thither, the one or the other may be made acquainted with all the towns, cities, regions, countries, rivers, mountains, and passes, as well as with the lords unto whom the countries belong, from the duchy of Burgundy unto Jerusalem.”

The Esquire-Carver had the enterprise and heart of a true traveller. When people are attempting to deter him by the prospect of danger, he says—

“ I think, nevertheless, that nothing is impossible for a man to undertake who has a constitution strong enough to support fatigue, and has *health* and *money*.”

He thus acquaints us with the time of his departure :—

“ Having formed a devout resolution to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and being determined to discharge my vow, I quitted, in the month of February, in the year 1432, the court of my most redoubted Lord, which was then at Ghent.”

On the 8th of May, having travelled through France and Italy, he embarked at Venice for Palestine. He coasted Slavonia or Dalmatia, and touched at Pola, Zara, and Sebenico. He stopped

at Corfu, and sailed thence to Modon, "a good and fair town in the Morea, belonging to Venice." He then proceeded to Rhodes, where the Knights Hospitallers of St. John maintained their dominion against the Saracen; he next went to Cyprus, or Candia; and finally he reached Jaffa, "in the Holy Land of Promise."

At Jaffa he had both comfort and discomfort; for there the pardons and indulgences of pilgrims commenced, and there he found that the once strong and splendid Christian city had been entirely destroyed, and that the only places where a pilgrim might shelter himself from the burning heat of the sun, were under a few tents or huts covered with reeds. He also found that the Turks were disposed to treat all Christian pilgrims very harshly. Hastening to quit Jaffa, he went on to Ramlé. The following passage will help the reader to understand the business or course of travel of pilgrims in these parts.

"Ramlé, the first town we came to from Jaffa, is without walls, but a good and commercial town, seated in an agreeable and fertile district. We went to visit, in the neighbourhood, a village where my Lord Saint George was martyred; and, on our return to Ramlé, we continued our route, and arrived, after two days, at the Holy City of Jerusalem, where our Lord Jesus Christ suffered for us.

"After performing the customary pilgrimages [within the city], we performed those to the mountains, where Jesus fasted forty days; to the Jordan, where he was baptised; to the church of Saint John, near to that river; to that of Saint Martha and Saint Mary Magdalen, where our Lord raised Lazarus from the dead; to Bethlehem, where he was born; to the birth-place of Saint John the Baptist; to the house of Zachariah; and,

lastly, to the Holy Cross, where the tree grew that formed the real cross : after which we returned to Jerusalem When all these pilgrimages were accomplished, we undertook another, equally customary, that to St. Catherine's on Mount Sinai. For this purpose we formed a party of ten pilgrims—Sir André de Thoulongeon, Sir Michel de Ligne, his brother Guillaume de Ligne, Sanson de Lalaing, Pierre de Vaudrey, Godefroi de Choisi, Humbert de Buffart, Jean de la Roe, Simonet de —, and myself.”

The first five of these names belonged to Lords of the greatest rank in the States of the Duke of Burgundy, who apparently had embarked at Venice with the Esquire-Carver.

At Gaza, which is described as being situated in a fine country near the sea, and at the entrance of the desert, our noble pilgrims were shown the *palace* of Samson, as also the gates of that other palace which he shook down upon the heads of the Philistine Lords,

“ While their hearts were jocund and sublime,
Drunk with idolatry, drunk with wine,
And fat regorg'd of bulls and goats,
Chanting their idol”*

Our truth-loving Esquire-Carver will not, however, venture to affirm that the fragments he saw were *really* the ruins of these palaces.

He and his companions travelled two days in the desert without seeing anything worthy of being related. But one morning they had an adventure and a fight.

“ Before sunrise,” says our Ecuyer-Tranchant, “ I saw an animal, running on four legs, about three feet long, but scarcely a palm high. The Arabs fled at the sight

* Milton, Samson Agonistes.

of it, and the animal hastened to hide itself in a bush hard by. Sir André de Thoulougeon and Sir Pierre de Vaudrey boldly dismounted and pursued it, sword in hand, when it began to cry like a cat on the approach of a dog. Sir Pierre struck it on the back with the point of his sword, but did it no harm, from its being covered with scales, like a sturgeon. It sprang at Sir André, who, with a blow from his sword, cut the neck partly through, and flung it on its back, with its feet in the air, and killed it. The head resembled that of a large hare; the feet were like the hands of a young child; and it had a pretty long tail, like that of the large green lizard. Our Arabs and interpreter told us it was very dangerous."

There can be little doubt that the valorous Burgundian knights had engaged nothing else than a poor lizard; and that the Arabs either had some superstitious dislike of the creature, or for their diversion gave a false account of it to the noble and warlike pilgrims. There is a lizard in this part of the world, very large, but very timid and innocent, called the *Monitor*, from a notion of the people that it gives warning of the approach of the crocodile: it frequently measures more than three feet in the body.

Our Esquire-Carver fell so ill in the desert of a burning fever, that it was impossible for him to proceed to Mount Sinai. His companions mounted him upon an ass, and commended him to the care of one of the Arabs, who undertook to reconduct him to Gaza. This slow, lonely journey, and the heavy sickness, gave him an opportunity of forming a more correct and better opinion of the poor Arabs than that which he had entertained before, upon the prejudiced reports of other Christian travellers. The wanderers lodged him in their

tents, behaved most hospitably and kindly to him, and set him to sleep by that most ancient mesmerism of the East, *i. e.*, by gently kneading and rubbing him with their hands.

"During all this time," he says, "no one did me the least harm, or took the least thing from me. Yet would it have been easy for them so to do; and I must have been a tempting prey, for I had with me two hundred ducats and two camels laden with provisions and wine."

At Gaza he met a Sicilian Jew, to whom he could make himself understood. The humane Jew went in search of an old Samaritan who had skill in medicine, and this good Samaritan cured our honest Burgundian's fever.

While lodging with the Cordelier monks of Mount Sion in the Holy City, he was frequently told that it was impossible for a Christian to return overland from Jerusalem to France. He says, modestly and piously—

"I dare not, even now that I have performed the journey, assert that it is safe. I thought, nevertheless, that nothing was impossible. . . . It is not through vain boasting that I say this; but, with the aid of God and his glorious mother, who never fail to assist those who pray to them heartily, I resolved to attempt the journey."

He kept his project for some time a secret from his companions. After visiting other consecrated places, the party proceeded to Damascus, where they found a number of Genoese, Venetian, Neapolitan, Florentine, and French merchants, purchasing spices and other Indian productions, which had been brought thither by caravan, and which were to be carried down for embarkation to Baireuth.

Without the walls of Damascus they were shown the identical spot where St. Paul saw the vision and fell from his horse; as also the very stepping-stone from which St. George mounted his tall war-horse when he went forth to combat the Dragon.

“This last stone is two yards square, and, *they say*, that when, formerly, the Saracens attempted to carry it away, in spite of all the strength they employed they could not succeed.”

The stone is still pointed out to all travellers; and few devout Catholics entertain any doubt upon the legend.

From Damascus the Burgundians returned to Baireuth. Having once more and ineffectually attempted to make him forego his bold purpose, Sir André and the other knights embarked here in a galley for Europe, leaving Bertrandon alone, in a strange land, and among infidels, to find his way through Syria, Asia Minor, across the Bosphorus, and then through the continent of Europe, from the banks of the Danube to those of the Seine. Even the European part of the journey was not to be performed without great difficulty and danger.

Returning to Damascus our enterprising traveller there saw the arrival of the great annual caravan from Mecca, which was made, as in the ancient times, and even before the coming of Mohammed, for the double purpose of trade and devotion. The caravan he saw was so vast, that it was two days and as many nights ere it was all within Damascus. There were three thousand camels, loaded with the rich products of the remote East. The caravan was composed of Moors, Turks, Barbaresques, Tartars, Persians, and men of other

nations. Bertrandon was told by a Bulgarian renegade who had been both at Mecca and Medina, that Indians, "the inhabitants of *Prester John's* country," brought every year to Medina great quantities of spices and other productions of their country; that the yearly caravan to Medina must always be composed of *seven hundred thousand* persons; and that when this number ~~is~~ incomplete, Allah sends some of his angels to make it up.

Fortunately our Ecuyer-Tranchant found at Damascus a trade caravan, under the guidance of a good-natured Turk, about to start for Bursa, or Brusa, the once splendid capital of the Greek kingdom of Bithynia, situated at the foot of Mount Olympus, in the midst of delicious groves and running waters, and at the distance of only two days' journey from Constantinople. Bertrandon dressed himself in the Oriental costume, and pretended that he was going to see a brother at Brusa. The Turkish chief, putting his two hands on his head and touching his beard, told the noble Burgundian that he might join his slaves and travel with them.

"As a mark of my gratitude," says the Esquire-Carver, "I went to offer him *a pot of green ginger*, but he refused it; and it was by dint of prayers that I prevailed on him to accept it. I had no other pledge for my security than what I have mentioned; but I found him full of frankness and good-will; more so, perhaps, than I should have found many Christians."

But, before the Brusa caravan was ready, Bertrandon, being mistaken for a Genoese, was arrested and cast into prison, as some subjects of the republic of Genoa had recently captured and plundered a Mohammedan vessel. But Antonio Moroz-

zini, the Venetian consul, and other friends interceded with the governor of Damascus, and the mistake as to the country of his birth being demonstrated, our Burgundian was set at liberty.

In the meanwhile the caravan had started. He, however, soon overtook it on the road, and was welcomed by many kind Turks, who afterwards took much pain to teach him their language. Luckily there was in the caravan a Jew from Caffa, who could speak Italian, and explain many things to Bertrandon, such as the names of districts, towns, &c., all of which the returning pilgrim noted down, day by day, in his little book. These notes, doubtlessly, were occasionally flavoured by the Jew's Oriental temper and love of exaggeration. But, Bertrandon being a man of good, sober sense, they rarely ran into any great extravagances: and, altogether, they are admirably and indeed wonderfully correct for a traveller of the earlier half of the fifteenth century. There is a good deal about miraculous Madonnas and miracle-working images of saints; but this is to be expected from a devout pilgrim. Take it as it is, Bertrandon de la Brocquière's Itinerary from Jerusalem to Paris is, by many degrees, more correct than the Vicomte de Chateaubriand's modern Itinerary from Paris to Jerusalem.

Balbec, or, in old Syrian, Baalbec, the city of Baal, or of the Sun—which name the Greeks correctly translated into *Heliopolis*—was not then the lone and desolated place which it now is.

“Balbec,” says Bertrandon, “is a good town, well inclosed with walls, and tolerably commercial. In the centre is a castle, built with very large stones. At present it contains a mosque, in which, *it is said*, there is a

human skull, with eyes so enormous that a man may pass his head through their openings. I cannot affirm this for fact, as none but Saracens may enter the mosque."

In the neighbourhood of the City of the Sun, the Ecuyer-Tranchant had a narrow escape from being eclipsed. Having no tent, he and a Mameluke took up their quarters in a garden, apart from the caravan. There they were joined by two Turcomans, returning from their pilgrimage to Mecca, who supped with them in the garden.

"These men, seeing me well clothed and well mounted, having, besides, a handsome sword, and a well-furnished carquois,* proposed unto the Mameluke (as he owned afterwards, when we separated), to make away with me, as I was only a Christian, and unworthy of being in their company. The Mameluke answered, that since I had eaten bread and salt with them, it would be a great crime; that it was forbidden by the law of the Prophet; and that, after all, God had created the Christians as well as the Saracens."

In traversing the country between Baalbec and Adana, he met six or eight Turcomans, accompanied by a woman who wore the "quiver full of arrows" at her back; and he was told that the women of this race were brave, and fought like men in time of war.

"Nay, it was added, and this seemed to me very extraordinary, that there are above 30,000 women who thus bear the carquois, and are under the dominion of a Lord who resides among the mountains of Armenia, on the frontiers of Persia."

This sounds somewhat like a revival of the ancient and splendid romance of the Amazons. The simple truth is, the wife of a Turcoman chief,

* Quiver, or arrow-case.

even in our own day, very generally carries a bow across her saddle, or a quiver behind her back, as a sign of honour or rank. The custom, which has no doubt obtained from the remotest times, among the nomadic races, may very well have given origin to the Amazonian fable.

The Christians of Asia were perfectly persuaded that the Jews and infidels had a disagreeable smell about their persons, which nothing but the water of baptism could take away. Bertrandon alludes more than once to this superstition, which was long so common even in Europe and in England that the lively Sir Thomas Brown wrote a whole paper about it.* Our Esquire-Carver never speaks of it, on the evidence of his own sense; but he tells us that he was assured that many a Mohammedan, without being in any wise a convert to Christianity, got himself baptized in order to sweeten his body. Thus, speaking of a certain Karman or Prince of Karamania, he says—

“He and his son have been baptized, in the Greek manner, to take off the *bad smell*. It is thus that these grandees get themselves baptized that they may not stink.”

This Karnian, as described by Bertrandon, bears a family resemblance to Djezzar, the butcher of Acre, and other Turkish pashas of comparatively recent date.

“He is well obeyed by his subjects, although I have heard people say he was very cruel, and that few days passed without some noses, feet, or hands being cut off, or some one put to death. Should any man be rich, he condemns him to die that he may seize his property; and, it is said, that the greater part of his nobles have

* Vulgar Errors.

thus perished. Eight days before my arrival, he had caused one to be torn to pieces by dogs. Two days after this execution he had caused one of his wives to be put to death, even the mother of his eldest son, who, when I saw him, knew nothing of this murder."

At Adana our traveller saw two young Turks, who had voluntarily had their eyes thrust out at Mecca, as soon as they had seen the glory and visible sanctity of the tomb of Mohammed. After that sight no object was worthy of being reflected upon their retina; and they knew that hadjis or pilgrims thus blinded would be revered and cherished by all true believers in the prophet.

He was told that one of the prayers they regularly put up in their mosques was, that God would deliver them from the coming of such a man as Godfrey of Bouillon, the conqueror and first Christian king of Jerusalem. For a very long way on his journey he saw signs of the once extensive dominions of the crusading Christians. Among these were the ruins of buildings which had been erected and occupied by the brave Knights Templars, and which yet bore in their front the cross of that order.

Safely, though not without risk of many dangers, Bertrandon got through the defiles of Mount Taurus, over many rivers and mountain-torrents, across the wide plains of Kutaya and Iconium, and finally reached Brusa, which was then the most considerable city of the Turks, who had not as yet achieved the conquest of Constantinople. Here he was so fortunate as to meet a Christian and a friend in the person of a Genoese merchant of the noble family of Spinola. From Brusa he proceeded for Constantinople with three Genoese

merchants who had come from Pera to purchase spices from the merchants of the caravan with which Bertrandon had travelled through Syria and Asia Minor. In little more than half a century after his journey, the Portuguese, by finding their way to India round the Cape of Good Hope, well nigh destroyed this ancient caravan trade, and with it the one great source of the wonderful prosperity and wealth of Genoa, Venice, and the other Italian states, who, for so many ages, had carried the produce of the East across the Mediterranean into the markets of Europe. It was this diversion of the grand stream of commerce, far more than her internal jealousies, dissensions, crimes, and follies, that rendered Italy an easy prey to foreign conquerors. So long as Portugal kept the new trade she was splendid and powerful; and so soon as she lost it she declined. It was afterwards the same with Holland. Let England who now has the "golden East in fee," be warned by the lessons of the past.

Bertrandon's short description of Constantinople is exceedingly interesting, and is about the last account we have of that city under the barbarized and despicable Greek empire. In 1453, only twenty-two years after our traveller's visit, that shrunken empire was annihilated and Constantinople captured by Mohammed II. Busbequius, the diplomatic traveller, has left us a description of the city as it was when the Turks had been masters of it for a hundred years. It is interesting to compare his account with that given by Bertrandon.

Our Burgundian more than confirms the bad character given to the Greeks of the Lower Empire. He found them effeminate, suspicious, intol-

erant, insolent, and faithless. He had seen great probity among the Turks, but he could discover no such virtue among the Greeks. They were almost hemmed in within the walls of Constantinople. The Turks were seated at Adrianople, and held dominion over Macedonia, Thrace, Bulgaria, Servia, and nearly all the country from the gulf of Salonica to the river Danube. In these descriptions there is the truth and not the romance of travel; but our Ecuyer-Tranchant presently makes up for his deficiency in the latter quality.

At Pera, the suburb of Constantinople, he met with a wandering and inventive Neapolitan, named Peter of Naples, who told him not only that he had travelled as far as that undiscoverable region, the country of Prester John, but also that he had married a Christian wife of that country, and was about returning thither. Bertrand says—

“He made many efforts to induce me to go thither with him. I questioned him much respecting that strange country, and he told me many things which I shall here set down; *but I know not whether what he said be true, and shall not, therefore, warrant any part of it.*”

Peter of Naples, indeed, told tales to shake the belief of a much more credulous man than our noble Esquire-Carver; and yet he did little more than repeat what had been told to earlier travellers in the East, and by them reported to the nations of the West. He drew from the old stock-materials, merely putting in a little spice of his own, Prester John, the Old Man of the Mountain, and their respective dominions being subjects which admitted of little exaggeration, even from the Vesuvian fancy of a Neapolitan. It is very probable that this

Signor Pietro had never been farther to the eastward of Constantinople than Scutari or Chalcedonia. It was once a custom for men to travel (on paper) in the remotest regions, "without quitting their rooms, or running risk of shipwreck." Gemelli Carreri, who wrote a minute account of his journeys in the East, which was long considered as an authentic book, and very often quoted as an authority, never left his own country, and but seldom stirred out of his own city. He was a countryman of this Peter, who had married the Christian wife in the dominions of Prester John. Gemelli wrote his book, and conceived all his adventures at Ispahan, &c., in a lofty and airy apartment—*anglicé*, a garret—in the Strada de' Libraj, or booksellers' street at Naples; and, according to a local tradition, he was a man so little given to locomotion, that he could scarcely descend from his studio to the street without an effort. His name was, of course, as fictitious as his travels were.

From Constantinople our Esquire-Carver travelled to Adrianople, where the Turkish Sultan was then residing, and where were many merchants from Genoa, Venice, Florence, and Catalonia. He frequently saw the Sultan—Amurath II., father of the great Mohammed II.—who was a little, short, thick man, with the physiognomy of a Tartar. The rude Turko breed had not yet been improved by the intermixture of Circassian, Georgian, and Greek, and other European blood. When they first came into Asia Minor, and, even at a later period, when they first forced their way across the Hellespont and Propontis into Christendom, they were a repulsively coarse and ugly people. They

are now, perhaps, as handsome a race as any in Europe.

Amurath included among his vices that of hard drinking, as but too many of his successors have done.

"He loves liquor," says our Burgundian, "and those who drink hard. As for himself he can easily quaff off from six to seven quarts. When he has drunk much, he becomes generous, and distributes his great gifts: his attendants, therefore, are very happy when they hear him call for wine. Last year a Moolah [Priest] took it into his head to preach to him on this subject, admonishing him that wine was prohibited by the Prophet, and that those who drank it were not good Mussulmans. The only answer the Sultan gave was to order him to prison: he then banished him his territories, with orders never again to set his foot on them."

Travelling through Bulgaria, and passing Philipolis, Sophia, Nissa, and other towns, Bertrandon entered the territory of the despot of Servia, which he describes as a fine, well-peopled country, although it was tributary to the Turks. Proceeding on to Belgrade, and thence to Pest, he then crossed the Danube, and entered Buda, the capital of Hungary. After five more days' journeying he reached Vienna: here he found powerful friends, and his perils were at an end. In due time he arrived at Dijon, the capital of Burgundy, having satisfactorily proved that it was possible for a Christian to travel by land from Jerusalem to France. At Dijon he found his sovereign Lord the Duke of Burgundy.

"I appeared in his presence," saith Bertrandon, "dressed in the same Eastern dress I had on when I left Damascus; and I caused the horse, which I had pur-

chased in that town, and which had carried me all the way into France, to be conducted before him. My Lord received me with much kindness. I presented to him my horse, my dress, with the Koran and Life of Mohammed, written in Latin, which the Chaplain of the Venetian Consul at Damascus had given me."

He had performed what was—for the times—a very extraordinary journey ; and he had overcome all the difficulties of it with admirable perseverance, courage, and good nature. His name ought always to find an honourable place on the list of old travellers. His military details and speculations are written with rare good sense. He nobly combats the idea, then but too prevalent, of the invincibility of the Turks ; he exposes the tactics of those invaders, shows how they may be driven out of Europe, and even beaten from the Holy Land, and confidently declares that a league of only three of the warlike nations of the west—the French, English, and Germans—might march triumphantly to Jerusalem. But, in those jarring days no such league could be formed, nor any attempt made even to check the alarming progress of the Turks in Europe. In the course of a few more years even traders and pilgrims ceased to flock to the Holy Land ; and Bertrandon de la Brocquière's *Itinéraire* was consigned to an oblivion from which it has only recently been rescued.*

* In the year 1804 M. Le Grand d'Aussy modernized the old MS. in the National Library at Paris, and published it in a volume of the '*Mémoires de l'Institut.*' In 1807, Thomas Johnes, Esq., of Hafod, made a translation from the *Mémoires*, and printed it at his private press in Wales ; but Mr. Johnes omitted all the romantic stories about Prester John's country.

CHAPTER V.

It was no learned philosopher, no inquiring geographer, no serious writer of any kind, but a wit and wag, and the most exquisite and most humorous of romancers, that first impugned the veracity of the great Portuguese traveller of the sixteenth century.

It was Miguel Saavedra de Cervantes, the immortal author of *Don Quixote*, who first labelled poor Fernan Mendez Pinto, as the "Prince of Liars." A title coming from such a source was sure to last, and to be bruited over the world. For one man that would read the somewhat dry and ponderous book of the adventurous Portuguese, ten thousand would peruse and re-peruse the amusing works of the witty Spaniard. Hence it became a fashion in every part of Europe to speak of Mendez Pinto as the most mendacious of all travellers, who, collectively, were considered as being greater offenders against sober truth than any other class of writers or narrators. Congreve, who, very probably, never read a page of Pinto's book, either in the original Portuguese or in the English or French translation, took up the merry jest of Cervantes, and hit off a few words—by way of a simile—which have been as often quoted as any given passage that can be named,* and which have,

* "Fernando Mendez Pinto was but a type of thee, thou liar of the first magnitude!"

therefore, aided in perpetuating among Englishmen the notion that poor Pinto was in very deed, the "Prince of Liars," or a "Liar of the first magnitude." Surely men of wit ought to be careful and scrupulous how they bestow nick-names, when the effects of them can be so lasting and injurious.

Perhaps Cervantes in indulging in a witticism also gave vent to his national prejudices. The Spaniards and Portuguese have always entertained a cordial hatred of each other, and, in the sixteenth century, there was a rabid jealousy between them on the subjects of maritime discovery, and of conquests and colonization in India and those other regions of the East which Pinto visited and described.

Efforts, however, have not been wanting to rescue the fame of Pinto; and even some Spaniards—learned and serious men, writing on historical and geographical subjects—have laboured to undo the effect of Cervantes' joke, to prove that the staple of the unlucky Portuguese is honest unornamented truth; and that many things in his book, which had been supposed to be fabulous, had been confirmed by later and better-educated travellers. The first translator of the book into French, being himself a Portuguese, took very laudable pains, and exerted considerable eloquence, in order to re-establish the reputation of his countryman. This volume, which was published at Paris in the year 1645, and which is, perhaps, the best and fairest criterion whereby to judge of Pinto's real merits and demerits, is entitled, '*Les Voyages aventureux de Fernand Mendez Pinto, fidèlement traduits de Portugais, en Français, par le Sieur Bernard Figuier, Gentilhomme Portugais.*'

This Portuguese gentleman and translator dedicated his book to Cardinal Richelieu, who was then at the summit of his worldly power and greatness. Richelieu, though a poet (and a bad one) himself, was not likely to accept graciously the dedication of a romance which claimed to pass for truth, if he had believed the travels to be such a romance, and Pinto to be the "Prince of Liars." In his dedication the Sieur Figuier says to the Cardinal—

"I present it to you as an agreeable diversion from those serious occupations of state wherein you toil and watch for the public good and tranquillity. You will give it a new lustre, and put a stop to slander, by bearing testimony, with your grandeur, to the truths which are in it; you will stop the mouths of so many critics, who condemn as false that which the feebleness of their wit cannot understand"

"I am bold to say, that those curious minds who delight in the reading of rare books, will find an ample contentment in this, where, without quitting their room, and without running risk of shipwreck, they may cross the seas, view the finest provinces of the world, amuse themselves with things most strange and unheard of, study among those divers manners of people whom we call barbarians, their religion, their laws, their great riches, their government, as well in time of war as in time of peace; and, in one word, bring before his eyes, as in a picture, whatsoever Europe, Africa, and Asia, in their whole extent, possess of most exquisite and most marvellous"

"That which led me to translate this book, was to reveal many singularities which other historians have not touched upon in their works, and to show by the same means *the great deeds which the Portuguese have done in the East Indies, albeit the revolutions of Time have robbed them of the fruit of all their exploits, and now-a-days the Spaniards claim all the glory for themselves.*"

In the advertisement, the printer or publisher of this (now) old and rare volume, states that great pains had been taken with the translation; that seven or eight years had been employed upon it, and that all possible researches had been made among histories of India, of voyages, travels, etc., to clear up the doubtful passages. This French translation is, like the original in Portuguese, broken up into short chapters; it contains 226 chapters, the original 225. In our old English translation, on the contrary, the chapters are lumped together, there being in all only 81; and by this process a good deal of confusion has been very unnecessarily created. Our old English version, by Henry Cogan, which was republished in 1692, made its first appearance in 1663, during the early part of the reign of Charles II., and consequently at a period when sneering, and persiflage, and a universal incredulity and scepticism were à la mode. In so bantering a time there was little likelihood that the staid, sober folio would find many readers, or counteract the jest of Cervantes. It was the very season when a joke was preferred to a fact, and when all things were turned into jests—the honour of men; the chastity and constancy of women; the love of country; the brave, self-regardless spirit which animates us to bold action and high adventure, and carries us over sea and land; and the inward sense of religion, which bids us hope for another world, far vaster, and fairer, and happier than this.

Mr. Cogan ushered his translation into the world with all due ceremony, and even with some solemnity. There was the usual dedication to a person of quality, and a preface setting forth the

merits of the author, and adducing some proofs of his veracity. But all this could avail but little; the name of Pinto continued to pass as synonymous with "Prince of Liars;" and, down to our own day, his book continued to be generally regarded as a tissue of falsehoods without any intermixture of truth.

Far be from us the task or the wish to prove that Fernam Mendez never draws the long bow, and that all his accounts are rational and correct. It will, however, be easy to demonstrate that the amount of truth in his book by far exceeds the amount of error, and that many of his most marvellous relations are entitled to credit. No doubt most people who have thought of him at all, have thought of him only as a lively inventive droll—as a sort of Baron Munchausen. Poor fellow! he was anything rather than this; he was a sober, serious, sad man, full of sorrows, and acquainted with grief from his cradle; whatever may have been the irregularities and sins of his wandering, sea-faring, more than half-piratical life, he was, when he composed his book, a religious man, heartily attached to the faith in which he had been nurtured. In the Pagan lands beyond the Indian Ocean he had spent much time among ascetic monks and enthusiastic missionaries—the heroes and martyrs of the Propaganda Fidei; and it was his fortune to record some of the last holy doings and sayings of a Catholic hero and saint—St. Francis de Xavier—whose biographer admits that he derived much of his information from papers procured from Pinto's widow.* Such a man as this

* Lucena, 'Historia da Vida do Padre Francisco Xavier, Lish., 1600.

might be credulous and superstitious, indeed, but it is safe to conjecture that he would not wilfully misrepresent facts.

He was born of obscure parents at Montemor-o-Velho, near Coimbra, about the year 1510, or during the first year of the reign of our Henry VIII.

The first chapter of his book will enable the reader to judge of his character:—

“After what Manner I passed my Youth in the Kingdom of Portugal, until my going to the Indies.

“So often as I represent unto myself the great and continual travels that have accompanied me from my birth, and amidst the which I have spent my first years, I find that I have a great deal of reason to complain of Fortune, for that she seemeth to have taken a particular care to persecute me, and to make me feel that which is most unsupportable in her, as if her glory had no other foundation than her cruelty. For, not content to have made me be born, and to live miserably in my country during my youth, she conducted me, notwithstanding the fear I had of the dangers that menaced me, to the East Indies, where, instead of the relief I went thither to seek, she made me find an increase of my pains according to the increase of my age. Since then it hath pleased God to deliver me from so many dangers, and to protect me from the fury of that adverse fortune, for to bring me into a port of safety and assurance, I see that I have not so much cause to complain of my travels passed, as I have to render him thanks for the benefits which until now I have received of him; seeing that by his divine bounty he hath preserved my life, to the end I might have means to leave this rude and unpolished discourse unto my children for a memorial and an inheritance. For my intention is no other but to write it for them, that they may behold what strange fortunes I have run for the space of one and twenty years, during the which I was

thirteen times a captive, and seventeen times sold in the Indies, in Cethiopia, in Arabia, in China, in Tartaria, in Madagascar, in Sumatra, and in divers other kingdoms and provinces of that Oriental Archipelago upon the confines of Asia, which the Chinese, Siamese, Guços, and Lecquios named, and that with reason, in their geography 'the eye-lids of the world,' whereof I hope to intreat more particularly and largely hereafter; whereby men, for the time to come, may take example, and a resolution not to be discouraged for any crosses that may arrive unto them in the course of their lives. For no disgrace of fortune ought to essoign* us never so little from the duty which we are bound to render unto God; because there is no adversity, how great soever, but the nature of man may well undergo it, being favoured with the assistance of heaven. Now, that others may help me to praise the Lord Almighty for the infinite mercy he has shown me, without any regard for my sins, which I confess were the cause and original of all my misfortunes, and that from the same Divine Power I received strength and courage to resist them, escaping out of so many dangers, with my life saved, I take from the beginning of my voyage the time which I spent in this kingdom of Portugal, and say, that after I had lived there till I was about eleven or twelve years old, in the misery and poverty of my father's house within the town of Montemor-o-Velho, an uncle of mine, desirous to advance me to a better fortune than that whereunto I was reduced at that time, and to take me from the caresses and cockerings of my mother, brought me to this city of Lisbon, where he put me into the service of a very honourable lady; to the which he was carried out of the hope he had, that by the favour of herself and her friends he might attain to his desire of my advancement; and this was in the same year that the funeral pomp of the deceased King Emanuel, of happy memory, was celebrated at Lisbon, namely, St. Lucie's Day, the 13th of December, 1521, which is the furthest thing I can remember.

* Relieve or discharge us.

In the meantime, my uncle's design had a success clean contrary to that which he had promised to himself in favour of me; for having been servant of this lady about a year and a half, an accident befel me that cast me into manifest peril of my life, so that to save myself I was constrained to abandon her house, with all the speed that possibly I could. Flying away then in very great fear, I arrived before I was aware at the ford of Pedra, which is a small port so called. There I found a carvel of Alfama, that was laden with the horses and stuff of a lord who was going to Setuval, where at that instant King Joam the Third kept his court, by reason of a great plague that reigned in divers parts of the kingdom.

"Perceiving then that this carvel was ready to put to sea, I embarked myself in her, and departed the next day. But, alas! a little after we had set sail, having gotten to a place named Cezimbra, we were set upon by a French pirate, who, having boarded us, caused fifteen or sixteen of his men to leap into our vessel, who, finding no resistance, made themselves masters of her. Now after they had pillaged every one of us, they emptied all the merchandise wherewithal ours was laden, which amounted to above six thousand ducats, into their ship, and then sunk her; so that of seventeen of us that remained alive, not so much as one could escape slavery, for they clapped us up all bound hand and foot under hatches, with an intent to go and sell us at La Rache,* in Barbary, whither also we found, by being amongst them, they carried arms to the Mahometans by way of trade. For this purpose they kept us thirteen days together, continually whipping us; but at the end thereof, it fortuneed that about sunset they discovered a ship, unto which they gave chase all the night, following her close like old pirates long used to such thieveries; and having fetched her up by break of day, they gave her a volley of three pieces of ordnance, and presently invested her with a great deal of courage. Now, though at first they found some resistance, yet they quickly rendered themselves

* El-Arasch.

masters of her, killing six Portugals and ten or eleven slaves. This was a goodly vessel, and belonged to a Portugul merchant of the town of Condé, named Silvestrè Godinho, which divers other merchants of Lisbon had laden at Saint Tome with great store of sugar and slaves, in such sort that those poor people, seeing themselves taken and robbed, fell to lament their loss, which they estimated to be forty thousand ducats. Whereupon these pirates having gotten so rich a booty, changed their design for going to La Rache, and bent their course for the coast of France, carrying with them such of ours for slaves as they judged fit for the service of their navigation. The remainder of us they left at night in the road, at a place called Melides, where we were landed miserably naked, our bodies covered with nothing but with the stripes of the lashes which so cruelly we had received the day before. In this pitiful case we arrived the next morning at St. Jago de Caten, where we were relieved by the inhabitants of the place, especially by a lady that was there at that time, named Donna Beatrix, daughter to the Earl of Villanova, and wife to Alonzo Perez Pantoia, commander and grand provost of the town. Now, after the sick and wounded were recovered, each of us departed, and got him where he hoped to find the best assistance; for myself, poor wretch, I went with six or seven that accompanied me in my misery to Setuval. Thither I was no sooner come, but my good fortune placed me in the service of Francisco de Faria, a gentleman belonging to the Great Commander of St. Jago, who, in recompense of four years' service that I did him, put me to the said Commander to wait on him in his chamber, which I performed for a year and an half after. But in regard the entertainment which was given at that time in noble-men's houses was so small as I was not able to live on it, necessity constrained me to quit my master, with a design to embark myself by his favour to go to the Indies, for that I thought was the best way I could take to free me of my poverty. So, albeit I were but meanly accommodated, I embarked myself notwithstanding, submitting myself to whatsoever

fortune should arrive unto me in those far countries, either good or bad.”*

“So he must now go wander like a Cain,
In foreign countries and remotest climes.”†

In this serious, plaintive way, nearly the whole of the ‘Book of Voyages and Adventures’ is written. With the exception of a few short intervals of prosperity or tranquillity, Pinto seems to have been incessantly exposed to the malice and persecution of fortune. *Il avait le guignon au corps*—he was decidedly an ill-starred, unlucky man.

When he took his departure for India, in a most humble capacity, the passage to that country round by the Cape of Good Hope had not been discovered by the great Portuguese navigator Vasco de Gama much more than a quarter of a century. While the Spaniards were following in the track of Columbus, who had discovered the New World five years before De Gama doubled the Cape, their rivals the Portuguese were flocking by the new sea-route to Hindustan and Malacca, from which there was a regular return-stream of wealth and luxury. The whole aspect of Portugal was changed as if by magic; and much more notable alterations and revolutions were effected in the East. As early as the year 1502, Vasco de Gama, who had made his first appearance in 1498, at Calicut, on the Malabar coast, merely as a trader and as a supplicant, had established a Portuguese empire in India, and had woven a net-work of treaties, alliances, and complicated connections with native princes—

* Old translation, by Henry Cogan.

† Thomas Heywood, ‘A Woman killed with Kindness.’

all eager to turn the irresistible force of European arms against their neighbours—which promised, ere long, to render Portugal the arbitress of all India, and mistress of those Eastern seas. Francisco da Almeida and his son Lourenzo had followed out and extended the vast designs of Gama, taking possession of the Maldivé islands, establishing factories or colonies in Ceylon, and forming commercial establishments at Malacca, on the magnificent island of Sumatra, and various other points; and the great Alfonso da Alburquerque, the successor of Almeida, by policy and by arms, had succeeded in planting the Portuguese flag, from point to point, all along the Asiatic coast—from Ormuz, at the entrance of the Persian Gulf, to Pegu and Siam, beyond the Irawaddi river. And still, year by year, as the Portuguese ventured to go up the rivers, or explore the deep gulfs, or land upon the islands, some new field was opened for trade, enterprise, war, or adventure. Wherever they appeared, and whether they appeared as officers and commanders in the service of the King of Portugal, or as private and independent adventurers, they were invited by some native prince or other to aid him, with their European arms and valour, in the wars he was carrying on or was meditating against his neighbours. The inevitable consequence was, that in most instances these unwise potentates were subjugated or despoiled by their allies. Many of these Portuguese bands of adventurers were associated together on the principle and acted according to the manner of the Buccaneers in the Western World. Like them, they held that European law, or the law of nations, did not extend beyond the equinoctial line; that force constituted right, and that

captures and prizes were to be made wherever they could make them. And as the Buccaneers styled the Spaniards, whom they plundered, "tyrants and robbers," so did these Portuguese call the natives of the East, whom they relieved of their wealth, "pirates and thieves." Thus every Indian vessel or Siamese or Chinese junk that was piratically captured at sea was set down as a pirate.

It must, however, be observed, that piracy really was a very prevailing practice in the Indian and Chinese seas, long before the arrival of the Portuguese. Marco Polo had found many sea-robbers there. The Malay race, who had conquered the peninsula which bears their name, and who had spread over the lower parts of Java, Sumatra, and all the greater islands of the Indian Archipelago, were—even as they still continue to be—the most active and desperate of pirates. There has been a period in the history of every ancient maritime people, when the profession was considered honourable: it was so among the early Greeks, among the Northmen of the middle ages, and it *is*, and for ages *has been* so, among the Malays—a cunning, active, daring, revengeful people.

Not a few of these private speculators, after the strangest adventures in the East, had returned to Portugal with marvellous wealth and with still more marvellous stories. In some of them Sindbad the sailor seemed to have come to life again. Like him they had visited many of the bright islands which gem the face of the Indian Ocean; like him they had heard fabulous accounts of other isles, and tales and romances of the wildest or most Oriental sort. Those who were the most moderate computed the islands of the Indian seas at twelve

thousand ; and these all peopled, and all rich in spices, perfumes, gems, and precious metals. The tales these adventurers told, and the solid wealth the more fortunate of them exhibited, impelled others to double the Cape of Good Hope, and try their luck in India or in the countries lying beyond it. Nor were all these adventurers of the plebeian or merely trading order : many noblemen in straitened circumstances equipped carvels or light vessels, and repaired in them to the golden East, just as, half a century later—in the days of our Queen Elizabeth—our men of worship and lineage, who had ruined themselves by their expensive living about town and court, began to fit out ships in order to better their fortunes by cruising or buccaneering against the Spaniards in South America. They did not all draw prizes in this lottery ; some, instead of plundering, were plundered and butchered, or sold into slavery ; and more perished by shipwreck, or of endemic diseases.

Fernam Mendez Pinto began very unfortunately. He left Portugal on the 11th of March, 1537, with a small squadron of five vessels. Doubling the Cape, passing through the Straits of Madagascar, and ascending the Red Sea or Arabian Gulf, he reached the coast of Abyssinia, and landed at Arkiko, which, he says, “ is in the territory of PRESTER JOHN, Emperor of Ethiopia.”* As the Abyssinians professed a rude, corrupted sort of Christianity, the honours or name of the mysterious Prester or

* Arkiko, or Arkeeko, is in the bay of Massowa or Masnah, where, two hundred and thirty-two years after Pinto's visit, our brave traveller Bruce landed to explore Abyssinia and seek the mysterious sources of the Nile.

Priest John—that priest and king, who, in earlier ages, had been sought for in Central Asia, in Tartary, in Siberia, in India, and elsewhere—had now, by universal consent, been bestowed upon the raw-beef-eating King of Abyssinia. The Portuguese had not only opened a trade with the subjects of this potentate, but they had also made many settlements along the African coast; and their flag was to be seen at intervals from Sallee, near the straits of Gibraltar, to Abyssinia and the mouth of the Red Sea. The export trade of Arkiko consisted chiefly of ivory, or elephants' tusks. Shortly after leaving that place, poor Pinto and the ship he was in were captured by three Turkish or Arabian galleys. The crew were carried to the town of Mocha, where they met with very barbarous treatment. In the first place they were bastinadoed till they were almost dead. Next, they were loaded with chains and paraded through Mocha.

“Thus chained all together,” says he, “and persecuted by every one, we were led in triumph over all the town, where nothing was heard but acclamations, and shouts intermingled with a world of music, as well of instruments as voices. Moreover, there was not a woman, were she never so retired, that came not forth to see us, and to do us some outrage; for from the very least children to the oldest men, all that beheld us pass by cast out of the windows and balconies upon us pots of . . . and other filth, in contempt and derision of the name of Christian.”

The next day “in regard that they had been so miserably moiled,” two of the Portuguese died. The survivors were sold as slaves. Pinto was bought by a *Greek*, who, after using him very cruelly, sold him again to a *Jew*. The Israelite

took him to Ormuz, on the Persian Gulf, and then re-sold him to two Portuguese gentlemen, who conveyed him to the Malabar coast. He arrived at Goa towards the end of the year 1538, poorer than he was when he quitted Portugal. But he found that there were at Goa five "foists" that were going to convey an ambassador to the Queen of Onoro;* and then to cruise against the Turks, whose behaviour at Mocha he could never forget. "Now one of the captains of these foists," he says, "being my special friend, and seeing me poor and necessitous, persuaded me to accompany him in this adventurous voyage."

The Portuguese ambassador concluded an advantageous treaty with the queen; and the foists had some sharp fighting with Turkish galleys and other vessels. Though somewhat warmly, all this appears to be veraciously reported. The encounters and adventures related are such, no doubt, as befel many Portuguese cruisers at that time. Pinto, personally, indulges in no braggadocio vein; he seldom speaks of himself in this part of his narrative, and when he does it is with a becoming modesty. He often confesses to having been excessively frightened.

Returning with two severe wounds to Goa, he fell in with Dom Pedro de Faria, a relative of the noble gentleman of St. Jago, with whom he had lived in Portugal. Dom Pedro, who had recently been promoted to the post of captain-general of Malacca, engaged Pinto in his service, and took him to that country, of which little was then known beyond the mere coasts.

* Onoro, or Onore, on the Malabar coast, was then governed by a Rana, or Hindu princess.

The captain-general had scarcely arrived at his seat of government ere "many ambassadors of neighbouring kings" waited upon him with the usual offers of alliance.

"Amongst these ambassadors was one from the King of Battas, who reigned in the island of Sumatra. . . . This ambassador, who was brother-in-law to his king, brought Dom Pedro de Faria a rich present of wood of aloes, calembaa, and five quintals of benjamoin in flower, with a letter written on the bark of a palm-tree, where these words were inserted:—

"More ambitious than all men of the service of the Crowned Lion, seated on the dreadful throne of the Sea, the Rich and Mighty Prince of Portugal, I, Angessiry Timassaia, King of Battas, do offer by a new treaty to replenish the magazines of thy king, who is also mine, with gold, pepper, camphire, benjamoin, and aloes. . . ."

In return his Battas majesty only begged the Portuguese captain-general to send him "powder and great shot" to be used against "those perjured Acheens," his "mortal and eminent enemies." Dom Pedro treated the ambassador kindly, and sent him away with even more than he had ventured to ask for. He also ordered Pinto to accompany the envoy to Sumatra, charging him to have his eyes open, and to note diligently whatsoever he should accurately observe.

After some days' sailing Pinto found himself in that stupendous island, where all the works of nature are on a magnificent scale, and where few zoological observations had as yet been made by Europeans. As Fernam Mendez was no naturalist, it could not but happen that he should be guilty of a few errors in describing the strange creatures he

saw in Sumatra. He ascended a river overhung by trees, and flanked by thick, moist jungle. Mr. Marsden, Sir Stamford Raffles, and other modern travellers who have written of the island, dwell with astonishment upon the number and size of the alligators, snakes, and other reptiles which are found in these localities. Pinto says—

“Now all the while we sailed in this river with a fair wind, we saw, athwart a wood which grew on the bank of it, such a many serpents and other crawling creatures, no less prodigious for their length than for the strangeness of their forms, that I shall not marvel if they that read this history will not believe my report of them; especially such as have not travelled; for *they that have seen little believe not much, whereas they that have seen much believe the more.*”

The alligators he describes as “very large lizards, with scales upon their backs, and mouths two feet wide.”

The Battas, to whose king Pinto repaired, were one of the five nations who then (even as they now do) divided the islands of Sumatra among them. They occupied the sea-coast on the west side of the island from the river Sinkel to the Tabuyong river, and extended across the island to the east coast. They were heathens, acknowledging three deities as the rulers of the universe. Their favourite food was and still is horse-flesh, and they fattened horses for the shambles as we fatten oxen. They had a language and written character peculiar to themselves, and were so far from being an illiterate people, that the accomplishments of reading and writing were very common among them. Yet these Battas were and still are strongly suspected of cannibalism. Indeed, it has been confidently

affirmed by some modern travellers that they invariably eat their prisoners of war and their condemned criminals.

Another of the five nations, the Acheens or Acheenese, with whom the Battas were perpetually at war, occupied the most northern part of the island. They were of a mixed race, and darker, taller, and stouter than their neighbours. They had embraced the Mohammedan religion, and were fiercely intolerant of any other worship. They had considerable trade and frequent intercourse with the Arabs of Jidda, Mocha, and Surat, and with the people of Bengal, Orissa, and other parts of Hindustan, as well as with the Chinese, from whom they evidently learned some of their arts as well of war as of peace. They were, and are, a jealous people, very industrious, very active, and by no means devoid of courage. Nearly thirty years before their enemies, the Battas, sent to ask assistance from Dom Pedro de Faria, at Malacca, they not only drove away a Portuguese band of adventurers who, under Diego Lopez Siqueira, attempted to gain a footing on the coast, but fitted out an expedition, and even tried to expel them from the town of Malacca.

On arriving at a city, which he calls Panaiu, Pinto found the King of the Battas making preparations for his war against the Acheenese. He and the powder and shot were welcomed. That he might the better see the country he accompanied the king in his campaign as a volunteer. His account of the fierce fighting between these heathens and the Mussulmans of Sumatra is animated, and no doubt correct in all essentials. The Acheenese had more gunpowder than the Battas, and by a

skilful, opportune use of it they won a great victory.

"In the very heat of the medley, the one side endeavouring to go on, and the other to withstand them, those of Acheen gave fire to a mine they had made, which wrought so effectually as it blew up the captain of the Battas and above 300 of his soldiers, with so great a noise and so thick a smoke, as the place seemed to be the very portraiture of hell."*

Disheartened by this catastrophe Fernam Mendez made haste to quit the Battas and return to his patron at Malacca. On his way he landed in what he calls "the kingdom of Queda," which was governed by an incestuous, cruel king. One of Pinto's companions, a Mohammedan merchant, furious at the abominations and atrocities he heard, called the king "a hog, or worse than a very hog!" This passed in the house of another Mohammedan merchant who was settled in the country; but the words were reported by a spy to the king, who soon gave orders to invest the merchant's house and murder him and all his guests. Pinto had got out of the way in good time. The next day, being summoned before the tyrant, he was horrified at the sight of the dead body of his late host, friend, and servants. He thought his own death-hour was come, but the monster was afraid to kill him *because* he was a Portuguese. In great fear, and without a moment's delay, Fernam quitted the country. He arrived safely at Malacca, where he related the wonderful things he had seen and heard to the much astonished Dom Pedro de Faria. He told many things about Sumatra which were

* Cogan's Translation.

then quite new, and the truth of which has, in several instances, been more than corroborated by modern writers who had lived long in the island.* It would have been miraculous if his relations had not contained some admixture of error and fable. He was not much more conversant with other sciences than with natural history. He avowedly reported many things upon mere hear-say; and an imperfect acquaintance with the Malay and other dialects spoken in Sumatra, may very well have been the cause of not a few mistakes. He stayed but a short time in the country, and he had but few opportunities for deliberate observation. The preservation of his own life must have occupied most of his thoughts while campaigning with the King of the Battas, or travelling with the Mohammedan merchant who came to so tragical an end. Although, as a traveller, Pinto is hardly to be compared with Marco Polo, we may apply to him what the judicious Tiraboschi says of the old Venetian :—

“I am very far from wishing to uphold the relations of Marco Polo, as entirely true, without falsehoods, without errors, without exaggerations of any sort. I would not very easily concede such praise even to our modern travellers, who tell us so much about their veracity and exactness. They all swear with one accord, that they have seen everything with their own eyes, and yet they contradict one another in the prettiest manner in the world! Now, if even our modern travellers, who are so much more enlightened than the old ones, have not as yet renounced their native right of now and

* More especially the late and venerable Mr. Marsden, in his admirable *History of Sumatra*; Crawford, in his *History of the Indian Archipelago*; and Lady Raffles, in *Memoirs of the late Sir T. S. Raffles*.

then selling us fables, how can we pretend that our Marco ought not to have enjoyed the same privilege? It is scarcely possible for any traveller to observe, to examine, to ascertain everything. Very often he can only take a flying glance at an object; and often, when he has the opportunity of examining it attentively, he has not the convenience for immediately writing down his description of it."*

Among the other things that Pinto related to his patron, was a brief account of the peoples inhabiting all along the coast of Sumatra, and on the river Lampong.

"From Lampong," he says, "the rich gold of Menangeabo is transported to the kingdom of Camphur. . . . And the inhabitants affirm, out of their chronicles, how, in this very town of Lampong, there was anciently a factory of merchants, established by the QUEEN OF SHEBA, whereof one, named Nausem, sent her a great quantity of gold, which she carried to the Temple of Jerusalem, at such time as she went to visit the wise KING SOLOMON. From whence, some say, she returned with child, of a son, that afterwards succeeded to be Emperor of Ethiopia, whom we now call PRESTER JOHN, of whose race the Abyssinian kings vaunt they are descended."

The legendary and fabulous part of this story is evident enough;† but the whole of it is not a fable.

* *Storia della Letteratura Italiana.*

† The legend is, however, strictly in conformity with the traditions the half-barbarous Abyssinians believe and report. They claim Queen Sheba, or Saba, as their native sovereign—a great and enlightened empress, who had trade with distant parts of the earth, who visited King Solomon at Jerusalem, and had a child by him, and who converted her people from Paganism to a belief in the one God. According to their chronicles the son of Solomon and Sheba was named Menilek; and from him have descended all the emperors or kings that have since reigned in Ethiopia or Abyssinia.

Sumatra was once noted for its gold, and a considerable quantity, quite enough to be called a *large* quantity in ancient days, is still exported. The places in which it most abounds are still the mountains which surround the table-land of Menangeabo; and still the greatest quantities of it are carried down the river and into the bay of Lampong, where dwell a people or nation that have a strong resemblance to the Chinese.*

Five-and-twenty days after Pinto's return to Malacca, arrived there another ambassador from Sumatra; not, however, deputed by the King of the Battas. He came from the King of Aaru, another independent and heathenish prince, who was at war with the Mussulman ruler of Acheen.† This ambassador, who asked for warlike stores and for other aid, told De Faria, in a set speech, that "the tyrant of Acheen wanted to usurp the king's, his master's, territories, in order to exclude the Portuguese from all commerce with the spices of Banda and the Moluccas, and from all the navigation of the seas of China, Sunda, Borneo, Timor, and Japan."

Notwithstanding this very alarming assertion, the ambassador was allowed to depart empty-handed; but, shortly after, Dom Pedro de Faria, upon serious consideration, resolved to send the king some arms, ammunition, and armour, as also a coat

* Marsden, Hist. Sumatra.

† All these Mussulman tribes or nations were Malays, who appear to have been converted to the Mohammedan religion in the eleventh century of the Christian era. There were, however, to be found on the Malay peninsula, and in several islands of the Indian archipelago, factories of Arabs who came from the Persian or the Arabian gulf. These Arabs are generally called Turks, or Moors, or Moormen, by our old travellers.

of gilt mail, lined with crimson satin, for his own wear, and many other garments of divers sorts. For greater expedition this present was embarked in a large row-boat. When all was ready Dom Pedro importuned Pinto to take the charge. "Whereupon," saith poor Fernam Mendez, "I undertook it in an ill hour, as I may say, and for a punishment of my sins, in regard to what happened unto me thereupon."

The mariners who went with him appear to have been mostly natives of Malacca. The outward voyage was prosperous, but the homeward one very calamitous. As they were running along the coast of Sumatra their vessel was shattered by a sudden tempest, and sunk in deep water. Of eight-and-twenty persons on board, three-and-twenty were drowned in less than a quarter of an hour.

"For us five," says Pinto, "that escaped by the mercy of God, we passed the rest of the night upon a rock, where the waves of the sea had cast us. There all that we could do was with tears to lament our sad fortune, not knowing what counsel or course to take, by reason the country was so moorish, and environed with so thick a wood, that a bird, were she never so little, could hardly make way through the branches of it, for that the trees grew so closely together. We sate crouching for three whole days upon this rock, where, for all our sustenance, we had snails and such filth as the foam of the sea produceth there. After this time, which we spent in great misery and pain, we walked a whole day along by the isle of Sumatra, in the sea-ooze up to the girdle; and, about sunset, we came to the mouth of a river, some cross-bow shot across, which we durst not undertake to swim over, for that it was deep, and we were so weak and weary."*

They lingered on the bank all night, suffering so dreadfully from large flies, gnats, mosquitoes, &c., that they were covered with blood. The next morning, so soon as it was day, Pinto asked his four companions, who were all mariners, whether they knew anything of the country, and whether they could not see some house in the distance? and the eldest of them, who had a wife at Malacca, not able to restrain his tears, exclaimed, "Ahi! the house that is now most proper for you and me is the house of death!" And shortly after saying the words, the poor man died, having been wounded in the head by the wreck. Having buried him as well as they could in that wild place, Pinto and the other three men thought of crossing the river "for to go and sleep on certain great trees that they saw on the other side, for fear of the tigers and other animals, whereof the country was full." But the foremost two had scarcely reached the mid-stream when they were seized by alligators:—

"We saw them caught by two great lizards that were before our faces, and in an instant tearing them to pieces, dragged them to the bottom, leaving the water all bloody, which was so dreadful a spectacle to us, as we had not the power to cry out; and, for myself, I knew not who drew me out of the water, nor how I escaped thence, for I was gone before into the river as deep as my waist, with that other mariner which held me by the hand."*

On the morning of the following day a native boat, coming to the mouth of the river, discovered Pinto and his only surviving companion, and took them up. But the boatmen were not good Samaritans; they wanted money from the poor shipwrecked strangers, and, when told they had none,

* Cogan.

they lashed them to the mast and flogged them to make them confess where they had concealed it. Fernam Mendez was well nigh killed ; but he was far more fortunate than his comrade, to whom they administered a diabolical mixture, which made him fall into so furious a vomiting that he died an hour after. As the poor mariner had cast up no gold from his stomach, they did not think it worth their while to force the same drink down the throat of Pinto, so they carried him ashore, to a town called Ciaca, to sell him for a slave. But, although they showed him three days in the market, nobody would buy him. They then turned him out of doors, hungry and almost naked ; and for six-and-thirty days he had no other means to live than what he got by begging from door to door, " which, God knows, was very little, in regard those of the country were extreme poor." At last, as he was lying in the sun, upon the sand by the sea-shore, and lamenting his ill fortune with himself, it pleased God that a Mohanmedan, born in the island of Palimbang, came accidentally by and entered into discourse with him. Upon learning that he was a Portuguese, and that money might be made at Malacca in the way of merchandize, the Moorman soon loaded a bark for that port, and took Pinto with him. They arrived without accident, and, after a month's residence at Malacca, Fernam Mendez recovered his health and strength.

He was then sent by Dom Pedro de Faria to the kingdom of Pahang, in charge of a barque laden with merchandize, and consigned to a factor of the Captain-General of Malacca. He arrived at Pahang, the place of his destination, and landed the goods.* There was a charming appearance of tran-

* Pahang was, no doubt, a town on the Pahang, the

quillity in the country; but lo! the night before the morning on which Pinto was to re-embark in order to return to Malacca, the King of Borneo's ambassador, finding the King of Pahang in bed with his wife, slew his gracious Majesty. Upon this the rabble broke out in insurrection, and consoled themselves for the death of their king by plundering the town. They attacked the house of Dom Pedro's factor, and carried off everything in it. And thus Pinto was obliged to depart without a ducat of all the 10,000 ducats' worth of goods he had brought with him from Malacca. Not liking to return to Dom Pedro thus empty-handed, he went to Pantani,* where he was very well received by the native king, and by some Portuguese who had formed a factory there. While he was casting about, to hit upon some method of making up for the serious losses he had sustained at Pahang, they happily heard of three great junks, of China, very rich, and appertaining to Mohammedan merchants, natives of the kingdom of Pahang. After some short deliberation, Pinto and his countrymen resolved to capture these junks. The enterprise proved of easy execution; and the prize was so valuable that Fernam Mendez considered himself more than indemnified for all that had been lost at Pahang.

Pinto remained at Pantani twenty-six days, to sell the Chinese commodities. In this interval

greatest river of the Malay peninsula; on the eastern side of which it falls into the sea.

* Pantani, or rather Patani, is the most southern of the small kingdoms on the Malay peninsula, subject to Siam. It is the most fertile and productive of all those Malay states. Its capital was once much frequented by vessels going from Hindustan to Siam, Cochin China, or China.

a foyst* from Malacca arrived, commanded by Antonio de Faria, a relative of Dom Pedro. Antonio's mission was both diplomatic and commercial: he came to conclude some treaty with the native prince, and to sell a cargo of goods. Being puzzled how to dispose of a great quantity of woollen and cotton cloths, the manufactures of India, he was advised by some experienced men to send it all to Lugor, a great town in the kingdom of Siam, one hundred leagues lower down towards the north, "for they alleged that this port was very rich and of great vent, by reason of a world of junks that arrived there daily from the isle of Java, from Laos, Tamainpura, Japara, Demaa, Panamco, Lydayo, Passarvan, Solor, and Borneo."†

In conformity with this advice, Antonio de Faria procured a vessel for the voyage, and ordered sixteen Portuguese, of whom Pinto was one, to man her. With this vessel, and with goods on board to the value of 12,000 crowns, the adventurers reached Lugor Roads, and came to anchor at the mouth of the river. But it should appear that the fame of their late marauding exploit followed them thither; for, suddenly, "about 10 of the clock, just after dinner," they saw a great junk

* A "foyst," or "buss," was a large vessel for the transport of goods, but only half-decked.

† It is now perfectly well known that Lugor (variously written Ligor, Lichar, &c.) was, in old times, the seat of a very great trade. It is situated on the Malay peninsula, between the bay of Chaiya and Cajoe Patani. It still belongs to, or is dependent on, the King of Siam. It now contains no more than 6000 or 7000 inhabitants, chiefly Malays, Chinese, and Siamese. It is still annually frequented by junks from China and other countries, for cotton, tin, pepper, and rattans.

coming upon them, and before they could pick their teeth this junk grappled their bark with large cramp-irons, and some seventy or eighty Mohammedans, who had lurked under deck, rushed upon it, and cast thence many stones, darts, and lances, so that twelve of the Portugals were presently slain. The surviving four leaped overboard and swam for their lives. One of them was drowned: the other three reached the shore, and hid themselves in the nearest wood. The Mohammedans having emptied her of her good cargo, bored a hole in the bark and sank her. Of the three Portugals who were hidden in the wood, one died. Two days after this, Fernam Mendez and his only remaining companion were taken up near a river by a native boat, on board of which was "an honourable old woman, with a grave countenance." This serious Siamese dame was merciful and kind. She comforted them in their affliction, entertained them hospitably for three-and-twenty days in her own house, and then recommended them to a kinsman, a merchant and mariner, who was bound for Patani, whence they had started on their unfortunate trip.

Sad was the sorrow and unspeakable the rage of Antonio de Faria when he heard from the returned Pinto how they had been stripped of goods to the worth of the 12,000 crowns *which he had borrowed* at Malacca. He was afraid to return to meet his creditors, but he was on fire to meet with the Mohammedans and *pirates*, who had robbed him. He took a solemn oath upon the Holy Evangelists to go in quest of those pirates, and to avenge the death of the Portugals. All the company highly applauded his resolution; and, at the end of eighteen days, he found himself at the head of fifty-five fighting men, of whom Fernam Mendez was

one. They were all men of desperate fortunes, and in a very desperate humour. They might have hoisted the blood-red flag at their mast-head.

It was on Saturday, the 9th of May, 1540, that Antonio de Faria took his departure from Patani. He sailed along the coasts of the kingdom of Cambodja, and cast anchor off the mouth of a river named Toobasoy, up which the native pilot would not undertake to guide him, as he was unacquainted with the river. As the Portuguese lay here they saw a great sail making towards them from the main. Antonio de Faria hoisted the friendly flag of Cochin-China.

"They of the big ship," says Pinto, "instead of answering us in the same manner, and knowing that we were Portugals, to whom they wished not well, gave us very vile and base words, and from the top of their poop, made a Kaffir slave hold up his bare ——— to us, with a mighty noise and din of trumpets, drums, and bells, by way of scorn and derision to us."*

Antonio gave them a broadside to teach them better manners. They returned the fire; but as night was falling it was deemed expedient to defer the action.

Early on the following morning the Portuguese who had the watch perceived "three black things" coming towards them; they roused Antonio, who was sleeping on the hatches. "To arms! to arms! instantly to arms!" said that brave adventurer of the seas; and all his people quietly armed, and kept themselves snug under the bulwarks; and the "three black things," that were three barques "built i' the eclipse, and rigged with curses dark,"

* Cogun.

came swiftly along the face of the waters, and close alongside: and out of them leaped good forty men upon the deck of the Portuguese, expecting no preparation and no resistance. But Antonio, putting himself at the head of his fighting men, and invoking St. Jago, their patron saint, fell so courageously upon the boarders that he killed them almost all. Then he threw some pots of powder into the three dark vessels, and all those that were in them jumped into the sea and were drowned, save only five, "whereof one was the Kaffir slave that had showed us his tail-end, and another was the captain of the great junk, Similon by name, a *notorious pirate*, and our mortal enemy." In the junk, which was presently captured, they found, in silver of Japan, to the value of 54,000 ducats, besides many other rich commodities. And very soon after this, venturing up a river, they captured another richly-laden junk.

Like the bold buccaneers in the Western World, these Portuguese adventurers in the East made notable additions to geography and hydrography; they examined many an unknown river and bay, and visited many a coast, cape, and island, which no European had hitherto seen. Without charts, and very often without any native pilot to guide them, numerous accidents and calamities were inevitable.

Rich with prizes and longing for more, Antonio de Faria, crossing the gulf of Tonquin, made for the great island of Hainan, which the Chinese had conquered and colonized, and entered the bay of Carnoy (probably Can-tcheu), wherein were many boats fishing for pearl. Here the Portuguese mariners made too open a display of their wealth. Some people came on board their ship, and among the rest a venerable man, no doubt a mandarin, who

warned them to leave the bay, seeing that strange ships were not allowed to enter therein, but if they attempted it were burned, and all that were in them, forasmuch as that place was destined for the fishing of the treasures of the Son of the Sun, the lord and emperor of all that world.

Antonio, who no doubt had an eye to the pearls and to the many rich junks periodically passing through the narrow strait (now called the Channel of Junks) which flows between Hainan and the southern extremity of the province of Canton, wished very much to stay where he was. He assured the venerable gentleman that he and his company were merchants of Siam. The mandarin looked very suspicious—

“For,” said he, “we vow unto you, that never in our lives did we see so many bold young fellows together in any merchant-ship as we now see in this of yours, nor so spruce and smart; and it seemeth that in their country China silks are so cheap as they are of no esteem, or else that they have them at so easy a rate as they have given nothing near the value for them, for here we see them playing away a whole piece of figured silk at one cast of the dice, verily like men that came lightly by it.”*

In the end the venerable man entreated them to hasten away from that bay before the arrival of a great mandarin, who was coming with a great army to superintend and protect the pearl fishery. Following his advice they went away southward, to the river of Tananquim, where he assured them they would be very safe. But they had not been long in the river ere they were attacked by two great junks, which very likely had been sent after them by the venerable gentleman. Although taken by surprise, the Portuguese

* Cogan.

had the fortune or the valour to conquer both the junks. On board of one of them they found some unhappy Portuguese prisoners, from whom they learned—

“That the *pirate*, the master of the junks, had two names, the one Christian the other Pagan, and that his Pagan name was Necoda Necaulem, and his Christian name Francisco de Saa, being christened at Malacca, at such time as Garcia de Saa was captain of the fortress; and for that he (Dom Garcia) was his godfather, and had caused him to be baptized, he gave him that name, and married him to an orphan maid, a very handsome wench, the daughter of an honourable Portugal, to bind him the more to our religion and country. But in the year 1534, setting sail for China, in a great junk of his, wherein there accompanied him twenty of the wealthiest Portugals of Malacca, as also his wife, and arriving at the island of Pulo-Catan, they stayed two days to take in fresh water; during which time he and his company (who were all Chinese like himself) conspired the death of the poor Portugals, for to despoil them of their goods. So that one night, whilst the Portugals were sleeping and little dreaming of such treason, they killed them all with their hatchets; after which the pirate persuaded with his wife that she should turn Pagan and adore an idol that Tucan, captain of the junk, had concealed in his chest, and that then, being free from the Christian religion, he would marry her to Tucan, who in exchange would give him a sister of his to wife that was a Chinese. But in regard she would neither adore the idol nor consent to the rest, the dog struck her over the head with a hatchet till her brains flew out.” *

Since that time the piratical apostate had committed many great atrocities against the Portuguese.

Antonio de Faria went in a boat with some of the Portuguese prisoners, who had told him all these

* Cogan.

facts, to search for the body of the savage among the dead. He was found with a great cut over his head, and quite thrust through. He had a great chain of gold about his neck, to which was fastened an idol of gold with two heads, made in the form of a lizard, having the tail and paws enamelled with green and black. Antonio commanded his head to be chopped off, and the body to be chopped into pieces and cast into the sea. Some barbarous act of retaliation of this sort usually winds up the fights with the junks they encounter.

As Antonio de Faria continued his courses his conduct became more and more that of a down-right corsair. At the next port he put into, four great launches, with streamers and music and jollity, much mistaking his ship, came out to meet him. It was a gay bridal party, and in one of the boats was the bride, who expected to meet her bridegroom on board the Portuguese. The free cruisers took the three boats, and kept the bride and her two sisters as prisoners "because they were young, white, and well-favoured," and the rest they sent on shore, "because they were aged, full of sorrow, and fit for nothing." As the Portuguese sailed away they met the jubilant bridegroom coming to the place with four junks which belonged to his own father, and which were covered all over with flags, streamers, and banners.

"Passing by us," saith Pinto, "he saluted us with great store of music and shows of gladness, being wholly ignorant of his misfortune, and that we were carrying away his wife Alas! we shamefully cozened him."

At Mulpinang* Antonio succeeded in selling

* Apparently in the island of Sumatra.

the goods he had captured at a very good profit ; but as news arrived of his performances in other ports, he was obliged to take a hasty departure thence.

In the great bay of Cochin China he fell tooth and nail upon another junk, which, in the ordinary parlance, is called "a notorious Chinese pirate." The junk was of course conquered and captured, and, as "some Portugals were found on board with their throats cut," the Chinese prisoners were all killed and cast into the sea.

After cruising for several more months the Portuguese common men, whose number had been greatly increased, became very weary and impatient for a partition of goods ; so the determination was taken to return towards India, to winter in Siam, sell the goods there, and divide the profit. But storm and terrible tempest overtook them ; their ship and their junk prizes were cast on an unknown shore and broken to pieces, and all the men were drowned except fifty-eight, who were saved by being thrown upon "the Isle of Thieves" (not one of the *Ladrones*), a very properly named island for the reception of such guests ! It was a desolate place, and nothing on it to eat except such things as were hurtful, rotten, and vile to the taste.

But lo ! one day, the feast of St. Michael, as they were all drowned in tears and without hope of help, a kite came unexpectedly flying over their heads, from behind a point which the island made towards the south, and by chance let fall a fish called a mullet, about a foot long. It fell close to Antonio de Faria, who happily was among the saved. It somewhat amazed him ; but he got up, and seeing what it was, he returned a thanksgiving to God

(for, though piratically inclined, Antonio was a devout man), and then ordered the mullet to be broiled and given to such of the sick as most needed it.

On looking towards the point whence the kite came, they saw many more kites, flying and stooping. They concluded there must be some good prey on which the birds were feeding. They all ran thither, and, climbing the high ground, discovered a low valley full of fruit-trees, and a river of fresh water running in the midst. Before they went down they luckily perceived a stag newly slain, and a tiger preparing to eat him. They set up a loud cry, which scared the tiger into a wood, leaving the stag as he was. Then they went down and feasted, by the river side, upon the stag and upon divers mullets, which the kites, also frightened by their noise, let fall.

In this pleasant valley they remained till the following Saturday, when about break of day they discovered a sail making towards the island. In brief space of time the vessel, a Chinese, entered the natural harbour, and those that were in her fastened her to the shore with two cables, at the beak and stern, and lodged a plank ashore to pass in and out of her. About thirty big Chinamen, more or less, came out; some went to get wood and water, some began to wash their clothes, some dressed meat, and others went to wrestling and such like pastime. Seeing them all thus, without fear or order, Antonio rushed suddenly and quickly with his men from the thicket in which they were concealed, and gained the vessel. Then casting loose the two cables they put to sea, about a cross-bowshot from land. The poor Chinamen, hearing a noise, came running to the sea-side, amazed,

dismayed, and not knowing how to help themselves. Antonio fired at them with an iron gun he found on board, and this drove them scampering into the wood. This being done the Portuguese sate comfortably down to eat at their leisure a dinner which some of the Chinamen had ordered to be cooked for them on board by an old man: "and this dinner," says Pinto, as if with the water brought to his mouth by the recollection of it, "was a great skillet full of rice with hashed pig's meat; whereunto we fell with good stomachs, as being not a little hungry."

Totally indifferent to the fate of the Chinamen, whom they had so neatly and so opportunely tricked, Antonio and his people bore away large.

The first place they anchored at was Xamoy, described as a small village. Here they exchanged their small vessel for a better, by boarding a junk at midnight. They only found in the junk seven or eight Chinese mariners; and these careless fellows, without any watch upon deck, were fast asleep. The boarders bound them hand and foot, threatening "to kill them all if they cried out never so little; which put them in such a fear that they durst not so much as squeak." Then cutting the cables, Antonio hoisted sail and was away as fast as he could.

Next they fell in with a great Chinese *pirate* ship. They were making ready for action, when they perceived that the deck of the ship they were about to attack held many men in red caps, such as Portuguese mariners wore on board ship. They thereupon hailed, and making themselves mutually known, they discovered that the Chinese pirate and owner of this junk had many Portuguese in his pay, and was a great friend to them. And here-

upon Antonio de Faria struck a bargain with the Chinaman, engaging to cruise and plunder in concert with him, and to allow him one-third of all spoil taken.

Ever since the loss of his ship and property at Lugor, Antonio had been longing to encounter "the dog Coia Achem," the savage fellow who had achieved that exploit. Now as he was cruising with his friend and partner the Chinaman, he fell in with a little fishing-boat, wherein were eight wounded Portuguese, who had been quite recently robbed and barbarously treated by this very Coia Achem, and who told Antonio that he might find him anchored at an isle not far off.

The vindictive Portuguese were soon alongside the barbarous Mussulman. A desperate bloody conflict ensued. Antonio cut down the pirate Achem with his own hand; and such of the Musulinans as were not slain by the sword were driven overboard into the sea to be drowned. But five of them, who were picked up alive, were cast into the hold, "in order to be *tortured*, so as to answer questions." "But," adds Pinto, "they fairly tore one another's throats with their teeth, and killed one another for dread of what they expected from us; which yet could not keep them from being dismembered by our servants, and afterwards thrown into the sea, in company of the dog Coia Achem, 'Great Captain of the King of Bintam, the Shedder and Drinker of the Blood of Portugals,' as he had styled himself in his ordinary letters and messages."

There can be no doubt that these fierce determined Mohammedans were Malays. Nor can there be much doubt, however lightly he might estimate the blood of mere infidels and pagans, that Fernam

Mendez, while serving with Antonio and the pirates, contracted an amount of guilt and sin which afterwards weighed heavily upon his conscience, and drove him to confession and long and severe penance among the Portuguese monks of Malacca.

According to Fernam's enumeration there perished of Coia Achem's people three hundred and eighty, and of Dom Antonio's people forty-two, eight of whom were real Portuguese, whose loss afflicted him more than all the rest. As this captain of adventure was a very devout Catholic, he used the names of our Saviour and the Virgin Mary as his war cry; and he always had prayers, and generally a long sermon, after each of his murderous battles.

Making allowance for the difference of their religion, it was much the same with many of our buccaneers, who preceded their attacks upon the Spaniards by prayers and followed them by thanksgiving. Captain Sawkins, one of the most noted of their leaders, blew out the brains of one of his men, on his own quarter-deck, merely because the fellow, in a fit of absence, had dared to rattle a dice-box on a Sunday.

Having healed his wounded and cured his sick, Antonio de Faria bore away for Liampoo [Ningpo]. A fearful storm overtook him; to lighten his vessel he was obliged to cut away his masts, and throw overboard good part of his plunder; and in their hurry and confusion his mariners threw into the sea *twelve large chests full of silver lingots*, which he had taken from "the dog Coia Achem." Changing his course he fell upon the coasts of China, plundering all the junks he could meet, and occasionally landing to ransack a village or besiege a town.

Upon taking one place by assault, Dom Antonio, to save time and prevent future quarrels about division of spoil, told his people that they must plunder all they could and as fast as they could, and that every man should keep what he got. He, however, reserved to himself the contents of the house of a rich mandarin, who had cruelly insulted him in refusing to deliver up some Portuguese prisoners.

"These things being done," says Fernam Mendez, "and all our people having withdrawn, Dom Antonio de Faria embarked without any hindrance, and all our men were satisfied and happy, carrying away with them a good many handsome Chinese girls: and, without telling lies, I may say it was a piteous sight to see these damsels brought aboard by fours and by fives, tied together with the straps of our muskets, and all weeping and in despair, while our mariners did nothing but laugh and sing." *

At last the freebooters made Liampoo [Ningpo], where the Portuguese had a strongly-fortified settlement. They were received with "great affection and Christian charity;" prayers were put up for them in the church of "Our Lady of the Conception;" they were visited and feasted by the richest and noblest of the settlers, who assured them that the Chinese empire was in so unsettled a state that they might plunder and burn even the great city of Canton without danger or difficulty. Thirteen different princes were contending for the

* Where the name of Cogan, the old translator, is not given, we have rendered the passage ourselves from Figuier's translation, which we have sufficiently compared with the Portuguese original, to feel confident as to its accuracy. As well in the original as in the translations the names of many places, visited by Pinto, are given in so incorrect or capricious a manner, as to make it difficult or impossible to identify them.

imperial crown, and waging war in all parts of the empire.

Before quitting Ningpo Antonio de Faria furnished himself with a Portuguese priest or friar for each of his ships, in order that mass might be regularly performed at sea. He ran down to the gulf of Nanquin; but finding too many ships in those parts, he ventured no attack, but sailed away for the defenceless islands of the Chinese sea. The boldness with which the Portuguese navigated this unknown sea, and ran among the islands without chart, and oft-times without any pilot, is matter of astonishment and admiration; and Fernam Mendez's account of what he saw in this new world is, in the main, sober and correct. In many instances his truthfulness has been confirmed by our navigators of the last and of the present century.

The very devout Portuguese, settled at Ningpo, had learned from some Chinese that to the north-east there was an island called Callemplay, containing the tombs of seventeen Chinese kings, all made of gold, and surrounded by many idols, cast in the same precious material. It was in search of these golden tombs and idols that Antonio de Faria was navigating. For a long time they seemed to evade his pursuit. At last, when his crew was in despair and mutinous, he hit upon the island and upon some of the graves. But, alas! the gold turned out to be only burnished brass or gilded copper. The Portuguese, however, burst open the graves, and there, among the dried bones of the dead, they found a great quantity of silver.

After many adventures and not a few disasters, Antonio de Faria, during a typhoon, suffered a dreadful shipwreck in the bay of Nanquin. The

spoils of the tombs and all the booty were lost, and only fourteen Portuguese saved their lives.

"Behold," says Fernam, "how great was our disaster which befel us on Monday, the 5th of August, in the year 1542; for which may God be praised for evermore!"

The desert country upon which they were cast—without ammunition, without arms, and without any manner of implement—swarmed with tigers: to save their lost comrades, whose bodies were washed a-shore, from being devoured by the beasts, they with their hands and nails dug graves in the sand, and so buried them. They then marched along the coast towards the north, in search of some inhabited place. In crossing a narrow inlet of the sea, three of the survivors, being too weak to swim, were miserably drowned.

"These three Portuguese were very honourable men; and two of them were brothers: the one named Melchior Barbosa, the other Gaspar Barbosa; as for the third, named Francisco Borges Cayciro, he was also their cousin: all three were natives of Ponte de Lima, a city of Portugal, and very accomplished in valour."

After passing another miserable night, exposed to cold and wind and rain, and to the attacks of the tigers, and after marching another whole day, they perceived at evening-tide a great fire, and soon came up with five Chinamen, who were burning or making charcoal in a wood. These good-natured peasants gave them some rice to eat, and pointed out the way to a pagoda and hospital where pilgrims were wont to find food and lodging. When questioned by the four bonzes, or priests, at the hospitium, who they were and whence they came, the Portuguese said that they were natives of the kingdom of Siam,

poor honest fishermen, who had suffered shipwreck in the bay of Nanquin; and hereupon they met with a most humane and hospitable reception. When these bonzes, who were very poor, had entertained them two or three days, they sent them on to another hospitium, three leagues off, which was very rich. These places of refuge for pilgrims and for the poor of all classes were very numerous in China, and they had been faithfully described by Marco Polo.

The rich bonzes sent for a surgeon to cure their hurts, and lodged and fed the Portuguese Siamese during eighteen days. Fernam Mendez and his companions then went on to a Chinese town, where they played the part of poor pilgrims and mendicants, and obtained some money from the people. But at a village a little farther on they were less fortunate. The villagers, not committing a very great mistake, took them for foreign robbers, fell upon them, and, after beating them with their fists, threw them into a tank which was full of sharp biting leeches. From this uncomfortable prison they were liberated by a gentleman who chanced to pass that way; and they continued their march, very hungry and bleeding all over. They soon arrived at the mansion of a great mandarin who was sick and all but *in articulo mortis*, and who asked whether any one among them knew how to cure a fever? They had not this knowledge, nor had they any drugs or charms about them. Nevertheless, the old gentleman entertained them very hospitably, and sent them on their way the next morning. Two months they wandered through the immense provinces of China, begging in the villages, and avoiding as much as possible the great towns, for fear of being detected as Portuguese mariners. At last, in

an evil hour, they entered the town of *Taypor*. There they were seen, as they were begging from door to door, by a sharp magistrate, who caused them to be arrested, loaded with chains and iron collars, and cast into a frightful prison.

"We remained the whole of twenty-six days in that rude and miserable prison; and I must confess that we thought we were there twenty-six thousand years, because of the great evils we suffered: and it came to this, that one of our comrades, by name Juan Rodriguez Bravo, died upon our hands, eaten up by lice."

But one morning, when they were thinking of nothing less, they were dragged out of this prison, and embarked on a canal for the city of Nanquin, together with twenty or thirty Chinese criminals. At a town on their way they met a poor Muscovite, who had been five years in prison upon a false accusation of having killed a Chinaman. Almost as soon as they arrived at Nanquin, which is correctly described as an immense city, the second in rank in the empire, they were examined by a very rigorous mandarin, who ordered them a terrible flogging on the bare back. This punishment caused the death of two of them. Some charitable priests attended the nine survivors, healed their wounds, and then procured that they should be sent on to the grand imperial court of appeal at Peking, the capital.

The unhappy Portuguese ascended the grand canals, which struck them with astonishment, as they have since done English travellers familiar with the inland water communications of our age and country. They were also charmed with the number of the bridges and the magnificence of the pagodas, tombs, fountains, and arches of triumph.

While on his way to Peking, Fernam Mendez launches out into an historical account of the origin and foundation of the Chinese empire, and into a description of "the Great Wall," that wonder of the world, which had been built in remote ages to protect China from the 'Tartars. The account and the description are both avowedly taken upon trust from the Chinese, who have their full share of the Oriental spirit of exaggeration. But Fernam assures us that he afterwards saw the Great Wall several times, and carefully measured it; and his description, which was, we believe, the first given by any European traveller (Marco Polo having taken no notice of the Wall), is, on the whole, admirably correct, clear, and sober. This is one of the many things in his book which ought to have relieved Fernam Mendez from the imputation of being a "liar of the first magnitude."

"At last," says our traveller, "on Tuesday, the 9th of October, in the year 1544, we arrived in the grand city of Peking, whither, as I have aforesaid, we were sent by appeal; and, bound as we were, three by three, we were cast into a prison, where, for our welcome, we received each of us thirty stripes of the whip, which made some of us very ill."

In the end, however, they were acquitted by the supreme court, and liberated with a free permission to go again a-begging. For two months and a half they enjoyed this liberty in Peking; and amongst that countless population they found many charitable people. They were then sent to the city of *Quansi*,* where they were taken into the service

* Quiusai, or Kinsai (now Hang-tchew-foo), in the province of Manji. This city had been visited and described by Marco Polo, who speaks of its population and trade as being immense.

of the governor, as part of his body-guard. They were liberally and kindly treated, until there happened a quarrel among themselves, about a question of genealogy and nobility, and a commotion and a scuffle, which the Chinese laws have at all times held in great abhorrence.

"'This quarrel," says Fernam, "arose out of a certain vanity common enough to our nation; for which I can render none other reason than that we are very sensitive to things which touch the honour. This is what the difference was:—two, out of the nine that we were, got to very high words about the extraction of the families of the Madureyras and the FONSECAS; and to settle which of their two houses was held in the greater honour and esteem at the court of the King of Portugal. This affair grew so hot that from one word to another they got to very injurious language, saying 'who are you?' and 'you! what are you?' (and it is possible that neither of them was any great thing at the king's palace) in such sort that in the end they were so transported with choler that the one gave the other a great box on the ear, which the other returned with a stroke of his sword, which cut off the half of a cheek. And then the man that was so wounded snatched up a pike and thrust it through the arm of his adversary: in such sort, then, from that moment the quarrel and combat became general among us, and waxed so hot that out of nine that we were, seven were grievously wounded. But now the mandarin, hearing the great noise, ran to the spot with all his officers of justice and police; and these last having seized us, gave us then and there thirty stripes each, which covered us with more blood than the wounds which we had inflicted on one another had done. And this flogging being over they threw us into a subterranean prison, where we lay for forty-six days with iron collars, rather heavy, round our necks, handcuffs on our wrists, and fetters to our legs; so that, verily, we suffered much, and were again reduced to a deplorable condition."

This was enough to drive all family pride out of the shirtless, breechless, Portuguese adventurers. But their punishment was not yet over. At the end of the forty-six days they were brought before a very great and very austere judge, who told them that they deserved to be banished for life to mountains and deserts, where they might hear the roaring of wild beasts as savage as themselves. After this harangue they received another general flogging; and they were then removed to another prison, where they were treated more mildly.

“But this did not hinder us from detesting the FONSECAS and the MADULEYRAS, and above all the devil who had led us into this infamous trouble.”

At length, after two more months of captivity, the governor took pity on them, and they were released, though only to be slaves in perpetuity, and under the doom that if they ever quarrelled and fought again among themselves, whether about the antiquity of their families or aught else, they would all be instantly scourged to death.

“But, in effect,” continues FERNAM, whose back was not yet healed of the floggings he had already gotten, “God gave us the grace to live with one another from that day forward in all peace and concord.”

Although their task-masters made them work very hard, they were still obliged to beg from door to door for their daily bread or rice. Luckily, one of them, Gaspar de Moreyles by name, was a very good musician, “playing the guitar and singing to it with a voice which was not a bad one; and this music was very agreeable to the richer sort of Chinamen, who pass their lives in banquets and the delights of the flesh: and so they called Gaspar in

him away empty-handed." The minstrel generously shared the proceeds with his comrades.

One evening, as Fernam was returning all alone from a neighbouring thicket, with a bundle of firewood for his master at his back, he chanced to encounter a strange mysterious man, who, after some precaution, made himself known as a Christian and Portuguese! He was Vasco Calvo, son of Diego Calvo, who in former times had been captain of a ship belonging to a nobleman of Portugal. He had accompanied an embassy which Lopo Suarez had sent to Canton, and had escaped with his life when the rest of the embassy were murdered in that city. He had been detained seven-and-twenty years in the country, but had been allowed to marry a Chinese woman, and, being a calm prudent man, he had thriven in worldly goods, having a house and servants of his own. He bade Mendez go and secretly invite his comrades; and that same night he gave them all a good supper, and good Catholic prayers after it, with the *Pater Noster*, *Ave Maria*, *Credo*, and *Salve Regina*.

Several months passed tranquilly enough, but one night—"on Wednesday, the 3rd of the month of June, in the year 1544, a little after midnight—so great a commotion took place among the citizens of Quinsai, that to hear their cries and the noise they made on every side, one would have said that the whole world was going to be turned upside down."

Fernam Mendez and his companions all rose and ran to the house of Vasco Calvo, to ask the meaning of the hubbub.

"He answered us with tears in his eyes that certain news had been received that the Great Khan, or King of

the Tartars, had fallen upon the city of Peking with a greater army than had ever been seen since the days of Adam. In that army, as people said, there were twenty-seven kings, who, among them all, conducted 1,800,000 men, of which 600,000 were cavalry; and these had marched by land with 80,000 *rhinoceroses* that drew the chariots and baggage of the army; and as for the 1,200,000 infantry, they had come by sea in 17,000 vessels! And the Emperor of China, feeling himself too weak to resist so great a force, had taken refuge in the city of Nanquin; and it was believed for certain that one of the great Tartar captains was already in a forest only a league and a half from Quinsai, and was about to march upon the town with 70,000 horse!"

This is, indeed, a grand specimen of numerical exaggeration; but it must be borne in mind that Vasco Calvo is talking in a surpassingly great fright, and is only quoting the numbers as he had heard them from the still more terrified Chinese. Unless we change them into camels, which were used by the Tartars, or into elephants, which they drew from Cochin-China and Siam, we hardly know what to make of the draught-rhinoceroses—a species of monster so dull and obstinate that no use, as far as we know, has ever been made of it, except in its hide and horns.

But the great indisputable fact is, that there was at this time a Tartar invasion of China, conducted by an immense army or union of hordes.

In the year 1366 the Chinese succeeded in casting off the Mongol Tartar yoke, and in expelling the degenerate descendants of that great emperor, Kub-lai Khan, whom Marco Polo had served. The native dynasty of Ming was then placed upon the throne, and Nanquin was made the capital of the empire. About the year 1408, Yoong-lo, the third emperor of the Ming line, transferred the capital to

Pekin, in order to be nearer to the frontier, to keep in check the Eastern Tartars, who had been joined by many of the expelled Mongols. From this union sprang the Manchow or Manchu Tartars, who, from the middle of the fifteenth to nearly the middle of the seventeenth century, when they achieved the conquest of the Celestial Empire, rarely allowed the Chinese any peace.*

The number of these Tartar hordes that were frequently brought into the field was prodigious. In the end it was one entire population poured upon another. But let us return to the poor Portuguese, who found themselves exposed to the risk of being crushed in the collision.

They asked their friend Vasco Calvo what they were to do in these straits.

“Calvo, very sad and dejected, made answer, ‘My brothers, would it were possible that we were now back in our own dear country, between Lauria and Curuche, or in the green bushes where I have often hid myself for there we should be safe: but since that cannot be, all that we have to do is to recommend ourselves to God, and pray for his assistance.’ And so my comrades and I, being nine in number, passed the rest of that night in great uneasiness and affliction. And early in the morning the enemy showed themselves with a terrible countenance. They were divided into seven dense battalions, having standards striped with green and white, which are the colours of the King of Tartary. And in that order they marched to the sound of drums, which they played in their manner, until they reached a great pagoda which was not far from the walls of the city. In their vanguard they had a great many light horse, who, galloping confusedly with their lances lowered, went round and round the battalions. Having

in this order arrived at the pagoda, they halted there a good half-hour, and formed themselves, to the sound of warlike instruments which kept continually playing, into the form of a half-moon, which gradually closed upon the city. Then, as they saw themselves near to the walls, at the distance it might be of a musket-shot, they suddenly rushed forward, crying so frightfully that you would have said heaven and earth were coming together. And in the next moment they raised 2000 ladders, which they had brought with them for that purpose, and gave the assault on all sides, scaling the walls with a most resolute courage. Now, albeit at the beginning the besieged made some resistance, they could not prevent the enemy from effecting their object; for, by means of certain battering-rams loaded with iron, they burst open the four gates of the city so opportunely, that they made themselves masters of the city, after having killed the governor, together with a great number of mandarins and gentlemen who had run to defend the entrances. There was no longer any resistance; and those barbarians put the whole city to the sword, and it is said that the number of the slain amounted to more than 60,000, comprised in which were many ladies and young women grandly beautiful, belonging to the richest lords of Quinsai. After the bloody massacre of so many people, fire was set to the proud city; private houses and the most sumptuous temples were levelled with the ground, and not a stone was left upon another. The enemy remained seven days, and then returned towards Pekin, where their king was, carrying away with them vast quantities of gold and silver and rich merchandize."

They also carried away the poor Portuguese as slaves. The Tartars soon discovered that these men were courageous, and had extraordinary skill in the art of war. One of them, George Mendez, offered to show them how to take a strong Chinese castle, before which they had suffered great loss. As some reward for their skill and their valour in the assault, the Tartar general gave them all golden

bracelets, and seated them near him at table. George Mendez was further recompensed by the present of a beautiful horse, and a round sum of money. The Portuguese had proved themselves too valuable as soldiers to be allowed to take their departure, as they had proposed doing, for the isle of Hainan, where they might have found some conveyance to Malacca; but they were now treated with great honour. They followed the Tartar general to the camp which the king, or grand khan, had established round Pekin. They were presented to his Manchu Majesty, who was seated on a rich throne, with thirteen tributary kings by his side, and whose whole court was far more splendid and more civilized than the strangers had expected. Making some occasional allowances for his numerals, we consider Fernam Mendez's descriptions of this court, of the native Chinese court, and of the ceremonies and observances of both, to be substantially correct.

The Tartars had not taken the city of Pekin; nor did they take it this campaign. At the approach of winter they raised their siege and began the march back to their own country. In the following spring the grand khan was induced to permit Fernam Mendez and seven of his companions to return to the coast, retaining only George Mendez, who, flattered by the honours he had received, volunteered to continue in the Tartar service. Those who departed received some money from the khan, and were recommended to the protection of an ambassador he was sending to Cochin-China.

“Also, before our departure, George Mendez gave us a thousand ducats; which it was very easy for him to do, seeing that his revenue already amounted to six thousand;

and he accompanied us all the first day; but at last we separated, not without shedding many tears, he from time to time regretting that he should have condemned himself to a voluntary exile from his friends and country."

The Tartar ambassador behaved kindly to the strangers, and without danger or difficulty they arrived with him at the court of the ruler of Cochin-China, which was then in a populous city, called by Fernam Mendez the city of Panangum.* The court he describes as being exceedingly magnificent; and his description is more than corroborated by the Jesuit missionaries who afterwards visited Cochin-China.

The Portuguese followed the court to another great city, named Uzanlué,† where the king made a triumphal entrance, having in his train two hundred superb elephants with turrets on their backs, and an amazing number of horses loaded with sacks, full of the heads and bones of the enemies he had conquered in battle. Here his majesty not only gave the foreigners free leave to depart, but also furnished them with a vessel to carry them to any part where they might hope to find a Portuguese ship, or some craft bound for Malacca. For seven days they descended a beautiful fresh-water river, which pursued a very indirect and winding course to the sea.‡ Mendez describes the towns, villages, palaces, and pagodas on the banks as truly magnificent. Recent travellers, though much struck by the in-

* Possibly Panomping, in Camboja.

† No doubt Hué, which is now the metropolis of the whole country.

‡ This was probably the great river Sai-gon, or Saung, the entire course of which is said to be more than a thousand miles.

dustry and ingenuity of the people, have not found this magnificence anywhere in the country ; but Cochin-China has been subjected to horrible wars and revolutions, and, like other neighbouring states, has greatly retrograded since the sixteenth century. Upon reaching the coast these eight Portuguese quarrelled so violently as to the course which they ought next to pursue, that they were very near having another general combat. This so disgusted a grandee of the court, who had accompanied them thus far by order of the king of Cochin-China, that he refused to be the bearer of their messages or letters of thanks, saying that he would rather have his head cut off by the king than offend God by having anything more to do with such turbulent godless men. Although left in a starving state upon a lonely island, their fierce quarrel was ended only by the sudden apparition of a fleet or squadron of Chinese or Malay pirates, who pressed them into their service. These rovers were soon attacked by a superior force and lost one of their junks, in which were five of the Portuguese. They then ran through a thickly-studded archipelago, and finally reached one of the islands that form the kingdom of Japan, where the pirates sold the merchandize they had plundered. Fernam Mendez remained five months and a half in Japan, delighted by the beauty and fertility of the country, as well as by the skill and refinement of the inhabitants, and being very kindly treated by princes and people, who had not yet conceived that jealousy of Europeans which subsequently made their country even more inaccessible than China. He had, however, one very serious mischance. A young son of the king overloaded Fernam's harquebuse, and was nearly

killed by the bursting of the barrel ; the afflicted father and mother of the youth, and the ministers and priests, threatened torture and death to the owner of the gun ; but Mendez undertook to act as surgeon : the young prince recovered, and then all was joy and gratitude. Fernam was rewarded with money and presents ; and was finally allowed to take his departure with his only two remaining comrades, in a great row-boat.

The three arrived safely, and with much gold and silver and rich merchandize of Japan, at the Portuguese settlement of Liampo,* which they had left so long ago to encounter such strange vicissitudes of fortune. The property they brought with them, and the tempting account they gave of the great wealth, beauty, and fertility of Japan—a country hitherto unknown to the Portuguese,†—secured them a very warm welcome from their countrymen :—

“The manner in which we were received is not to be described. A devout procession was immediately ordered to render thanks to God for his great favours. . . . And this procession was made from the church of our Lady of the Conception even unto the church of St. James, where we had mass and a sermon.”

The sermon being finished, they forthwith consulted how they might make the wealth of Japan their own, by conquest, by commerce, or by piracy. Fernam describes his countrymen as being abso-

* Ningpo.

† We need scarcely add, that the Japanese empire is still very imperfectly known. Sitkokè, or Sikokè, one of the group of islands which constitute the empire, has never been visited by Europeans. Of other of the islands we are acquainted only with the coasts.

lutely intoxicated by the new prospect of gain he had opened to them. Within fifteen days they got ready for sea nine junks. Our adventurer embarked in one of them; and they all set sail, like mad, for the golden Japan. They had neither chart nor pilot; and their greedy hurry was far too great to allow them to take any precautions in their navigation. In the midst of a storm and the darkness of night, seven out of the nine junks struck upon a reef of rocks and were lost.

“And this our loss was estimated to amount to more than 300,000 ducats of merchandize; besides that greater loss of 600 persons, of whom 140 were Portuguese, all rich men and honourable!”

And soon the two remaining junks were separated by the storm, never to meet again. The one which bore Pinto and his evil fortunes was eventually wrecked on one of the Loo-Choo islands. Twenty-four men and a few women escaped to the shore; the rest perished in the sea. The poorer natives of the island, and especially the female part of them, were very kind and hospitable, shedding tears at the sight of their miseries, and bringing them rice, fish, and fruit, and collecting clothes wherewith to cover them. But anon there arrived a courier from the king of those islands, with orders that the strangers were to be carried to the capital city. There, bound together like criminals, they were carried before a high court of justice, and were charged with the murder of some of the natives of Loo-Choo, who chanced to be at Malacca when it was taken by the Portuguese. The judges, who had received very correct information from some Chinese, also taxed them with being pirates by pro-

fession, and cruel to those who had fallen into their hands. The Portuguese pleaded that it was not piracy, but *free-trade*—and, sometimes, *war*—that they followed; that they had just laws and a very great king, although he was a long way off, and that they themselves were all honourable men. This, however, did not prevent the king from sentencing them all to be quartered—“their quarters to be hung up in the public places, that all the world might see his majesty’s justice.” The death sentence was to be executed in four days; but the news of it almost caused what the French revolutionists were wont to call “a revolt of women.”* The wife of a great officer ran to the house of her niece, who had given refuge to the wife of one of the Portuguese, and had conceived a great affection for the poor woman. Now this niece was a beautiful young lady, and was married to the governor of the city; and she and her aunt tore their cheeks with their nails, and made such a noise of weeping, shrieking, and lamentation, that well nigh all the women of the city rushed out of their houses, carrying their children with them. They all ran to the house of the great lady, where was the poor Portuguese wife, more dead than alive; and when they had heard all the story, they said that the strangers should not, must not die! And then and there they wrote a letter to the king’s mother, imploring her to intercede for a general pardon. This letter was carried by a young lady of rank. The royal matron had as tender a heart as the rest of the Loo-Choo women; she wept and prayed, and would not leave her son, the king, until the pardon was granted, and signed and sealed.

* *Émeute de femmes.*

When they were liberated from the dread of imminent death, and from their hard prison, Pinto and his companions were dressed in good native clothes, and conducted to the house of one of the great ladies, their benefactresses; and all the ladies of the city went thither to congratulate them, showing by their countenances how happy they were in the success of their merciful, generous, enthusiastic efforts. "Such," says Fernam Mendez, "was the effect of their good-nature, which is common to all the women of these islands." During forty-six days the Portuguese were lodged in the best houses, and made to fare of the very best. The mild, hospitable, generous character here given of the Loo-Choo islanders is not to be considered as one of Pinto's romances; for it has been more than confirmed by English navigators of our own day.*

But sorry was the return which Fernam Mendez made for all this generosity! He pointed out to his countrymen how rich and fertile were those islands, how conveniently situated for trade, and how easy to conquer! And he hoped that the Almighty would some day inspire the Portuguese nation to undertake an expedition thither "*principally* for the exaltation and increase of *the holy Catholic faith*; and, after that, for *the great profits* which might be derived therefrom."

At the end of their forty-six days of ease and feasting the Portuguese were embarked in a good

* See, particularly, Captain Basil Hall's 'Voyage of Discovery to the West Coast of Corea and the Great Loo-Choo Island;' Captain Beechey's 'Voyage to the Pacific and Behring's Straits;' Parker's 'Journal of an Expedition from Singapore to Japan.'

junk, the captain of which had the strictest of commandments from the king to convey them safely to their countrymen at Ningpo, and to treat them with all kindness on the voyage. Before they took their departure their friends made them many presents—

“In such sort that there was not one of us but carried away to the value of a hundred ducats; and as for the Portuguese woman of whom I have already spoken, she had more than a thousand ducats’ worth, in silver and in other commodities; and with this capital her husband, in less than a year, made up for all his losses by shipwreck.”

They arrived safe and sound at Ningpo. They were again received with kindness—but this time there was no religious procession. Pinto immediately made up his mind to get him back to Malacca, and there begin, *da capo*, to try his fortunes. He landed at that place as poor as he was when he first arrived in the East. His old patron Pedro de Faria, who was still governor of Malacca, immediately gave him employment, and as he was now conversant with the customs and with most of the languages of the countries beyond the Ganges, he was sent on a sort of diplomatic mission to the Thaluëyn river and the great city of Martaban, then one of the most splendid places in all Asia. He was to cultivate a good understanding with the rulers of Martaban, the trade of which city was very profitable to the Portuguese; he was to form alliances and engage mercenary forces, seeing that Malacca was threatened with a siege by the Acheneſe of Sumatra; and he was carefully to examine the coast of the Malay peninsula, for the length of 300 miles. He left Malacca in a junk, commanded

by a Moorman, on the 9th of January, 1545. There was no lack of adventure on the voyage, for Burmans, Peguers, Cochin-Chinese, Siamese, Assams, and Malays were all seeking to cut one another's throats; and every country, isle, or promontory Pinto approached was a scene of war. About a hundred Portuguese adventurers, fishing in these troubled waters, or taking advantage of this state of things, were privateering or pirating along the coasts, from the Straits of Malacca to the mouths of the Irawaddi river, in four small but well-armed vessels. They had formed alliances with the chiefs of some of the islands, who admitted them into their harbours; but their general rule appears to have been to plunder every ship or junk that was worth the trouble. They had captured, in the course of eight months, twenty-three very rich vessels, and an infinitude of smaller ones; they had spread the terror of their name far and near; and they had completely interrupted the trade of the Tenasserim provinces and the coast of Arracan. The temptation was too great to be resisted by Fernam Mendez and his Mohammedan captain. They joined the free-rovers for a season. But Pinto's evil star was still ascendant, and instead of capturing rich junks, he soon found himself engaged in a bloody battle with royal galleys, war-boats, and great fighting ships which had been sent out to destroy the four cruizers. The Portuguese gained a splendid victory, and killed a great many of the infidels "on the Vigils of Saint Michael the Archangel;" but Pinto's purse was not filled thereby.

It was not until Friday, the 27th of March, 1547, that our adventurer arrived at the mouth of

the Martaban or Thalueyn river. As it was already night, the captain cast anchor, intending to sail up the river to the great city on the morrow. But during the dark hours they heard a heavy firing of artillery in the direction of Martaban, which gave them much uneasiness. Nevertheless they continued their voyage at daylight; and, being favoured by wind and tide, they in a few hours doubled a point called *Moumayn*,* and got sight of the immense walls and numberless towers of Martaban. But, alas! that city, which was to have been the scene of Pinto's friendly, commercial negotiations, was girded on the land side by an immense army, and on the river side by an immense fleet. In short, the King of Braama (the King of the Burmans or Burmese) was conquering all Pegu, and was laying siege to Martaban. We have hinted that Fernam Mendez is not very moderate in the use of numerals. He sets down the Burmese besieging army at 700,000 men, and their fleet at 1700 sail! The siege had already lasted six months and thirteen days.

Fernam Mendez and the Moorman, his captain, were thinking of running down the river and of making for Bengal, when they were boarded by six Portuguese who were serving in the besieging army, and who advised them to join, as there was a very pretty prospect of prize-money and booty. Pinto landed with these adventurers, and found in the besiegers' camp a great many Portuguese, private men and captains, "and all rich and in good condition." He told Cayeyro, the chief of them, that he had come as a friend to the ruler of Martaban, and that Pedro de Faria's orders were, that all the Portuguese were to return to Malacca,

* Now Molmein.

to help to make good that important place against the enemy. To this Cayeyro replied, that those foes had been so beaten and butchered in other wars, that there was not the least fear of their besieging Malacca; that they and their people were well employed as they were, that they would take care and do nothing "against the service or interest of God and the King of Portugal," and that the best thing Pinto and his people had to do was to remain in camp and help to reduce Martaban. Our sailor-diplomatist did not need much persuasion: he stayed. His account of the barbaric siege, of the fighting, the negotiations, and the wiles and stratagems that were resorted to on either side, is very interesting and truth-like. In more particulars than one it resembles the details given by British officers who served in our Burmese war in 1824-5.

At last, being betrayed by some Portuguese, and by many of his own chiefs, and reduced to extremity, the Chambainhãa, or Prince of Martaban, agreed to surrender, upon the solemn promise of the Burmese king that his life should be spared, and that he and all his family should be allowed to retire to a Talapoy monastery. His Burmese Majesty exhibited all his pomp and power on the day of the surrender. His choice warriors put on their richest armour and gayest dresses, and carried gilded shields and gilded scimitars.

"He formed an avenue for the Prince of Martaban to pass through, and it reached from the gate of the city to the royal tent in the camp, a distance of three quarters of a league; and it was formed by double files of troops. And among those troops were 36,000 foreigners, belonging to 42 different nations, as Portuguese, Greeks, Vene-

tians, Turks, Arabs, Jews, Armenians, Tartars, Mongols, Abyssinians, Persians, Guzerats, Acheens, Siamese, Aracans, Papuas, Celebes, Peguers, Burmans, T'angus, Andamans, &c. &c. And about one hour after mid-day a gun was fired as a signal, and the gates of the city were thrown open ; and the conquered prince and his wife, and his children and his court came forth, riding upon small elephants. And at the piteous sight all the women and children and old men of Martaban raised, six or seven times, so loud and frightful a cry, that one would have said the end of the world was at hand. And these cries and lamentations were presently followed by hard blows, which they dealt on their own visages, beating and cutting their faces with stones, and with so little pity to themselves that they were soon all covered with blood. And, verily, the sight was so sad, that even the royal Burman guard, albeit men of war, and deadly enemies to the Martabans, and, as such, but little inclined to compassion, did weep like children as they viewed it."

The captive prince's wife, who had her four little children with her, and very small reliance on the solemn promise of the Burmese conqueror, fainted several times. As the prince passed near to the Portuguese captains, who, as Pinto frankly confesses, had played a very double and perfidious part in this war, he threw himself on the neck of his elephant, exclaiming—" Let me not see those ungrateful and wicked men ! Kill me, or remove them ! or I will go no farther." And, hereupon, the captain of the Burman guard reviled the said Portuguese, and bade them all retire and go shave their beards.

" Not to tell a lie," adds Pinto, " I was never more hurt in my life than by this public insult offered to the honour of my countrymen."

The captives were conducted to the Burman king's splendid tent, where they knelt and prayed for mercy, and where the high priest of Molmein joined in their prayer. They were forthwith consigned to the keeping of two great chiefs or won-gees, the poor prince being separated from his wives and children.

The Portuguese were deeply irritated and exasperated, "for they were all *honourable* men;" but they soothed their passions by anticipating the plunder of Martaban, whereof they had been promised an ample share. His Burmese Majesty, however, being every whit as cunning and as regardless of agreements as themselves, played them a sorry trick:—

"The fear which the King of Bramaa was in lest the men of war should enter into the city of Martaban, and should pillage it, now that it was night, before he had done all that which I am hereafter to relate, was the cause that he sent to all the gates of the city (being 24) Bramaa captains for to guard them, with express commandment, that upon pain of death no man should be suffered to enter in at any of them before he had taken order for the performance of the promise which he had made to the strangers, to give them the spoil of it; howbeit, he took not that care, nor used such diligence for the consideration he spoke of, but only that he might preserve for himself the Chambainhãa's treasure; to which effect he spent two whole days in conveying it away, it being so great that a thousand men were for that space altogether employed therein. At the end of these two days the king went very early in the morning to an hill, called Beidao, distant from his quarters some two or three flight-shots, and then caused the captains that were at the guard of the gates to leave them, and retire away; whereupon the miserable city of Martaban was delivered to the mercy of the soldiers, who at the shooting off of a

cannon, which was the signal thereof, entered presently into it pell-mell, and so thronging together, that at the entering into the gates, it is said, above three hundred men were stifled; for, as there was there an infinite company of men of war of different nations, the most of them without king, without law, and without the fear and knowledge of God, they went all to the spoil with closed eyes, and therein showed themselves so cruel-minded, that the thing they made least reckoning of was to kill an hundred men for a crown; and truly the disorder was such in the city, as the king himself was fain to go thither six or seven times in person for to appease it. The sack of this city endured three days and an half, with so much avarice and cruelty of these barbarous enemies, as it was wholly pillaged, without anything left to give an eye cause to covet it. That done, the king, with a new ceremony of proclamations, caused the Chembainhā's palaces, together with thirty or forty very fair rich houses of his principal lords, and all the pagodas and temples of the city, to be demolished; so that, according to the opinion of many, it was thought that the loss of those magnificent edifices amounted to above ten millions of gold; wherewith, not yet contented, he commanded all the buildings of the city that were still a-foot to be set on fire, which, by the violence of the wind, kindled in such manner as in that only night there remained nothing unburnt: yea, the very walls, towers, and bulwarks were consumed to the foundations. The number of them that were killed in this sack was sixty thousand persons, nor was that of the prisoners much less. There were an hundred and forty thousand houses, and seventeen hundred temples burnt, wherein also were consumed threescore thousand statues or idols, of divers metals. During this siege they of the city had eaten three thousand elephants. There was found in this city six thousand pieces of artillery, what of brass and iron, an hundred thousand quintals of pepper, and as much of sandal, benjamoin, lacre, lignum aloes, camphire, silk, and many other kinds of rich merchandize; but, above all, an infinite number of commodities,

which were come thither from the Indies, in above an hundred vessels of Cambaya, Acheen, Melinda, Ceilan, and of all the Straits of Mecqua, of the Lequois, and of China. As for gold, silver, precious stones, and jewels, that were found there, one truly knows not what they were, for those things are ordinarily concealed ; wherefore it shall suffice me to say, that so much as the King of Bramaa had for certain of the Chambainhãa's treasure amounted to an hundred millions of gold, whereof, as I have said before, our king lost the moiety, as well for our sins as through the malice and envy of wicked dispositions."

The Burman conqueror had no intention of keeping his promise with the poor prince of Martaban.

"The next day after the city was pillaged, demolished, and burnt, there was seen in the morning, upon the hill where the king was, one-and-twenty pair of gallows, twenty of the which were of equal height, and the other a little lower erected on pillars of stone, and guarded by an hundred Bramaa horsemen ; there were also round about the place very large trenches, where a great many banners, spotted with drops of blood, were planted. As the novelty promised somewhat which no man had heard of before, six of us Portugals ran thither to see what the matter might be ; and as we were going along we heard a great noise made by the men of war from the camp, whereupon we saw come out of the king's quarter a number of horsemen, who, with lances in their hands, prepared a great street, and cried out aloud : '*Let no man, upon pain of death, appear in arms, nor utter that with his mouth which he thinks in his heart.*' A pretty way off from these horse was the Xeminbrum, with an hundred armed elephants, and a good many foot ; after them went fifteen hundred Bramaas on horseback, cast into four orders of files, each of them six in a rank, whereof the Tanalaggeras, viceroy of Tanga, was commander. Then marched the Chausero Siammon, with three thousand Siammes, armed with harquebuses and

lances, all in one battalion. In the midst of these were an hundred and twenty women, tied and bound four and four together, and accompanied with Talagrepos, men of great austerity, and are such as the Capuchins amongst us, who laboured all they might to comfort them in this last act of life: behind them were twelve ushers with maces, that went before Nhay Canatoo, daughter to the king of Pegu, from whom this Bramaa tyrant had usurped his kingdom, and wife to the Chambainhãa, with four children of hers, which were carried by so many horsemen: all these sufferers were the wives or daughters of the principal commanders that the Chambainhãa had with him in the city, upon whom in the way of a strange revenge this Bramaa tyrant desired to wreak his spite, and the hatred that he had always borne unto women. The most of these poor wretches were between seventeen and five-and-twenty years of age, all of them very white and fair, with bright auburn hair, but so weak in body that oftentimes they fell down in a swoon—out of which, certain women on whom they leaned, endeavoured still to bring them again, presenting them comforts, and other such things fit for that purpose, but they would take none of them, for that they were, as I have said, so feeble and benumbed as they could scarce hear what the Talagrepos spake unto them; only they now and then lifted up their hands to Heaven. After the princesses marched three-score Grepos, in two files, praying with their looks fixed on the ground, and their eyes watered with tears, saying ever and anon in a doleful tone, ‘*Thou which holdest thy being of none but thyself, so justify our works that they may be agreeable to thy justice.*’ Whereunto others answered, weeping, ‘*Grant, Lord, that it may be so, that through our fault we lose not the rich gifts of thy promises.*’ After these Grepos followed a procession of three or four hundred little children, quite naked from the girdle-sted downwards, having in their hands great white wax lights, and cords about their necks. These, like the others, with a sad and lamentable voice, which moved every one to compassion, uttered these words: ‘*We most*

humbly beseech thee, O Lord, to give ear unto our cries and groans, and show mercy unto these thy captives, that with a full rejoicing they may have a part of the graces and benefits of thy rich treasures;’ and much more they said to that purpose, in favour of these poor sufferers. Behind this procession was another guard of footmen, all Bramaas, and armed with lances, arrows, and some harquebuses. As for the rearward, it consisted of an hundred elephants, like to them which marched first of all, so that the number of the men of war that assisted at this execution, as well for the guard, as for the pomp thereof, was ten thousand foot, and two thousand horse, besides the two hundred elephants, and a world of other people, both strangers and natives, that came thither to behold the end of so mournful and lamentable an action.”*

The poor Martaban prince, or Chambainhāa, his wife and children, and all the other prisoners were forthwith hanged, the queen or princess being suspended with two of her children on either side of her.

The passages we have last quoted form about the most stupendous and most marvellous part of Fernam Mendez Pinto’s book. They certainly contain matter which startles belief, and savours strongly of romance and rhodomontade; and yet, if only some deductions be made from Fernam’s numerals, the whole becomes very reconcilable* to truth. Nay, even as to numbers, wherever (in this portion of his narrative) he subdivides his masses, he is moderate and credible enough. He says that the number of the real Bramaas or Burmahs engaged in the siege, was only 20,000. In the war of 1824-5, when the Burman empire had wonderfully declined in power, wealth, and population, it put more than 200,000 warriors under arms to

* Old English Translation.

oppose the British invaders. In Pinto's time this empire extended from Mergui, near Tenasserim, to the province of Yunan in China; it had been victorious in war and very successful in policy; before the grand siege of Martaban commenced it had subdued nearly the whole of Pegu (Fernam says that 70,000 Peguers assisted the Burmans in that siege), and a great number of neighbouring princes and chiefs were tributaries to it, or, for the time, closely allied with it. Some of these states were accustomed to pour out one half of their entire population to war, and there can be no reasonable doubt that the collective number of men of so many nations gathered for this siege was enormous—though it may have fallen far short of 700,000!

But still less is it to be doubted that Martaban was, at this period, a very wealthy, populous, and magnificent city. The fact is attested not merely by the written annals of the Burmans and Peguers, and by their popular traditions, but also by the accounts of many recent English officers and travellers, who could judge of the ancient splendour of Martaban by the extent and grandeur of its ruins. In November, 1824, when a British column, commanded by Colonel Goodwin, ascended the Thaluëyn river, and passed by Moulmein (as the Portuguese had done nearly 300 years before them), the people were struck with astonishment at the long array of walls, towers, and gilded pagodas which Martaban presented. Though fallen from its high estate, the town was not taken by Colonel Goodwin until he had bombarded it for some time. From its walls the eye surveyed a succession of other pagodas, temples, and masses of ruins, stretching far away across the country which separates the

Thalueyn from the Sitang river, and denoting with melancholy certainty a teeming population, and an advanced degree of prosperity and civilization, which had long since passed away. At the conclusion of our Burmese war, when an English gentleman* crossed the Thalueyn river, to the bank opposite to Martaban, he found the country for a considerable distance completely covered with jungle; and in the very midst of that wilderness, where none but wild beasts and reptiles lived, he came suddenly upon some stupendous walls, neatly and strongly built of brick, but with large forest-trees growing from their tops or out of the fissures in their face. The walls, which had towers at their angles and along their several sides at regular distances, enclosed a vast square or parallelogram, then a void space, but with fragments of buildings which showed that *there* had once stood a very considerable city. Though it had been for ages buried in that jungle, and had rarely been seen except by some native hunting-party, the old name of the place had been preserved—it was Molmein, the place which Pinto had mentioned, and which was thus found on the very spot he had assigned to it. Since the time of our friend's visit, the jungle has been partly cleared away; some portions of the town have been rebuilt and peopled; and now Molmein is again taking rank among the commercial cities of the East. It has re-appeared almost another disinterred Pompeii. Like Martaban and the whole range of the Tenasserim provinces, it was included in the territories which the Burman

* Henry Gouger, Esq., who resided a long time in Ava, and to whom, on this as on preceding occasions, we have

king yielded to the British in 1826, by the treaty of Yandaboo. Immense forests of teak-wood were discovered near the Thaluyn river; and now every year some English ships take in cargoes of that valuable timber, at Molmein, and carry thither the manufactures of India and of Britain. Under the protection of our disciplined troops, and freed from foreign invasion and internal war, there is every chance that these long-wasted and depopulated regions will rapidly recover. Besides confirming the veracity of our calumniated Portuguese traveller, these facts must surely have another interest for every English reader who values the enterprise of his countrymen, and the effects of peace and commerce. The wars carried on for ages by the native powers—Burmans, Peguers, Siamese, Cassays, Assams, Cochin-Chinese, Keians, &c., &c., were of the most destructive and sanguinary nature. They were wars of extermination. Not one, but all, of these nations, on becoming invaders and conquerors, adopted and steadily acted upon the principle, that "it was incompatible with nature to have two kings or two races of people in one land." *

Whenever a dynasty was vanquished and captured, every member of it, whether man, woman, or child, was almost invariably put to death. More than two centuries after the time of Pinto, we have authentic accounts of executions quite as horrible as those which his Burman tyrant perpetrated at Martaban.

* Two Years in Ava, from May, 1824, to May, 1826; by an Officer on the Staff of the Quartermaster-General's Department. Lond., 1827.

About the middle of the eighteenth century the tide of war and victory rolled backward from Pegu upon the Burman empire; and, after a long and most destructive contest, the Peguers not only recovered their independence, but conquered Ava, and reduced the surviving Burmans to the saddest condition of dependency or slavery. But soon the great Alompra, the founder of the dynasty of the Golden Foot, which yet reigns at Ava, though himself of low extraction, and by profession a poor huntsman, made head against the Peguers, dispossessed them of the Burman capital, drove them down the Irawaddy, recaptured all the towns, forts, and stockades they had taken; and finally, after some vicissitudes of defeat and victory, recovered Martaban, besieged and took Pegu, the capital (with the king in it), and once more imposed the Burman yoke on the whole kingdom of the Talliens or Peguers. During this ferocious war a good many adventurous Frenchmen and Englishmen, chiefly from the settlements of their respective nations in Hindustan, engaged as allies or auxiliaries, and did not behave more conscientiously or honourably than Pinto's countrymen and comrades had done. Generally the French sided with the Peguers, the English with the Burmese. The sacrifice of human life was prodigious. On one day Alompra put to death, in cold blood, 1000 of his prisoners of war.* The kingdom of Pegu never recovered from this blow; its towns became unpeopled, its proud capital was reduced to a Golgotha; yet enough was left in the year 1824 to show what it had once been.

* Account of an Embassy to the Kingdom of Ava, in the year 1795, by Lieut.-Colonel Michael Symes.

"On approaching Pegu,"* says an English officer, "our curiosity became much heightened by the anxiety to behold the capital of this unfortunate, but once flourishing kingdom; and setting aside the chance of engaging the enemy, which seemed very problematical, we thought only of the interest attached to the ruins of this ill-fated city. Its sudden downfall from the height of splendour to insignificance, the crimes of which it had been the theatre, and the blood which had been spilt under its walls in the last efforts it made to retain its independence, all conspired to render the spot exceedingly interesting, and made it quite a classical memento with regard to the history of this country. . . . The troops were ordered to land, and a reconnoitring party was sent forward in the direction of the pagoda, which appeared a mile and a half distant, and separated from us by a very high bamboo hedge, which completely limited the view. The guide who preceded us moved towards the hedge, until we came to a narrow causeway, one hundred yards long, leading directly up to it, and having on either side a sheet of water, of great length and considerable breadth, which we immediately recognised as the ditch of Pegu. The bamboo hedge proved to be growing on what had once been a substantial brick wall, but was now a heap of rubbish, through which we passed, where a gate had formerly stood.

"On entering the precincts of the town, the eye in vain searches for those memorials of former greatness which might indicate days of splendour now gone by; the only striking object within a vast area of four square miles, the limits of which were clearly defined by the line of ramparts, being that far-famed temple the Shoo-madoo.

"It stands in the north-east corner of the square, on a slightly elevated ground, and is surrounded by a few minor pagodas, kioums, and a miserable collection of huts; the rest of the vast square was cultivated with

* "Pegu," says our officer, "is generally called Bagoo by the natives." Pinto says precisely the same thing.

rico : still, here and there a remnant of brick pointed out where a street had once been ; but now all was desolate.

“ There is something very melancholy in contemplating a scene like this, and contrasting in idea the past and the present. Here, not eighty years since, flourished one of the finest cities of the East, renowned in arms, and governed by the descendants of a long race of kings, but ‘ now how fallen, how changed ! ’ In one year Pegu witnessed the downfall of that power and preponderance which ages had been maturing—her sovereign and royal family, the captives of an elated conqueror, were soon exterminated—those temples to which all the empire crowded to offer up its adorations, no longer the resort of multitudes, were neglected, and fell into disrepute, whilst the inhabitants of the city were scattered over the country, and became the despised subjects of that very race whom they had before tyrannized over.”

Nor was it only in Pegu that this desolation was observed. As our victorious columns, under Sir Archibald Campbell, ascended the Irawaddi (penetrating to within three marches of Ava, the present capital of the Burman empire), they daily came in sight of great cities which had long since been depopulated and destroyed by war and fire. From the thick jungles and forests on either side the river were seen projecting the *tays* or gilded summits of many pagodas :—

“ Rushing from the woods, the spires
Seem from hence ascending fires ! ”

But of the thickly-peopled towns which once surrounded or flanked these sacred edifices, there scarcely remained a trace. The common dwelling-houses of the Burmans, being built of slight and perishable materials, soon disappear (if the population be but swept away), without the agency of fire. Hence nothing remains but the strongly-

built pagodas, kioums, and temples, with, sometimes, the brick walls of the town or city: and these, if situated in the exuberant plains, are very soon surrounded by, and buried in, a deep jungle. Trees take root in the crevices of the town-walls, straining and splitting them as they grow; by degrees these walls crumble and fall; underwood, brambles, and long rank grass grow over them, and then nothing is left to meet the eye except the pagodas and kioums.

Moreover, nearly all the inhabited towns in the great valley of the Irawaddi exhibited evidence that their population and splendour had sadly declined in these latter ages. Some of them, seen from afar through a bright atmosphere and reflected by the broad bright mirror of the Irawaddi, wore the aspect of—

“Huge cities, and high tower’d, that well might seem
The seats of mightiest monarchs.”

But a nearer approach dispelled the illusion, or, if it afforded any glimpse of grandeur, it was of a grandeur in decay. Pagahm-Miew, which was stormed by Sir A. Campbell, was the most important of all these cities above Rangoon, and yet its population was inconsiderable, and, with the exception of some well-preserved ancient towers, pagodas, and temples, there was hardly anything in it or about it but ruins—ruins—ruins! The immense brick wall and ramparts which had surrounded the city had fallen into the ditch. Yet these very ruins, and the more indestructible of the sacred edifices, sufficiently demonstrated what had once been the extent and splendour of the place. It was not possible to move a few yards without seeing the ruins of these religious edifices;

some of them appeared to have been splendidly carved and adorned. Under a grove of trees near the walls of the town, were several kionms or monasteries of great antiquity, the carving and tracing of which were exquisitely beautiful; they were far superior to the more modern edifices. Everything seen, as a work of art, appeared to have deteriorated from former days, and induced the belief that the Burman nation was fast receding in the scale of civilization. This has been the case with all the nations of the East, and probably with none more than China, whose institutions were framed to keep the people in a perpetual *status quo*. But it is the fate or nature of man that he cannot stand still—he must either advance or recede. Among the ruins of Pagahm-Miew towered the old temple of the Shoozeegoon, far superior in elegance to the better-known Shoo-Dagon at Rangoon. Within the town, and upon the adjacent plain for many miles, the eye rested upon an almost interminable succession of pagodas and ruins. The Burmans, in speaking of an *impossibility*, usually said, “it would be as easy to count the pagodas at Pagahm.”

It was from circumstances like these that Pinto's arithmetic waxed so excessive. On the whole, his account of the countries near the Irawaddi is the most interesting portion of his big book. If it is defective and in part erroneous, these faults will excite no astonishment when we call to mind how very little *we* really knew of the Burman empire previously to the invasion of 1824–5, and how many errors and miscalculations were committed (not without a fearful sacrifice of property and of human life) by our commanders in the field, and by those who directed them.

His gorgeous Oriental cities are not to be compared—as they too frequently have been—with those which now exist, tottering to their fall:—

“ Cadon le città, cadon i regni.”

This is but a common page of Oriental history. But it enables us to account for the difference between the present aspect of those countries and that which they exhibited centuries back, without taxing our old travellers with falsehood.

Although not much satisfied with the service of the “Bramaa tyrant,” Fernam Mendez was forced to remain in it a considerable time, taking part in other sieges, and being present at other horrible slaughters and wholesale executions. The selfish, unfeeling, treacherous conduct of some of his own countrymen was truly abominable. Through the malice and greed of one of them, Gonzalo Falcan, “a gentleman of a very good family in Portugal, commonly called by the Gentiles *Crisnan-Pacau*, that is to say, ‘Flower of Flowers,’ a highly honourable title among them,” the junk which had brought Pinto from Malacca was seized, all the property on board was confiscated, the Mohammedan captain and the crew were barbarously treated, and Pinto himself was for some time cast into prison and cruelly tortured by the Burmans. Fernam’s account of his sufferings may be, and no doubt is, somewhat exaggerated, yet the horrible treatment endured by our friend Mr. Henry Gouger, Dr. Price, Mr. Judson, and the other prisoners at Ava, in the years 1824-5, did not fall far short of them.* And there was this difference in the circumstances of the times, which was altogether unfavourable.

* See ‘Our Indian Empire,’ vol. ii.; and ‘Memoir of Mrs. Ann H. Judson, Wife of the Rev. Adoniram Judson, Missionary to Burmah,’ &c.

vourable to Pinto: in the nineteenth century the Burmans dreaded the power and vengeance of the British; in the sixteenth century they despised the power of the Portuguese.

Fernam Mendez accompanied an ambassador of the Burman tyrant into Siam, Laos, and the western parts of China. Of this long journey, which was chiefly performed by water, on rivers and canals, he certainly gives some very romantic and highly-coloured details; but even here there is a groundwork and a connecting string of sober and indisputable truth. Colonel Symes remarks that his account of the feast of Tinagoojoo, to the memory of all the dead, which is celebrated on the day of the new moon in the month of December, is ludicrously exaggerated; and yet this account is, in most of its particulars, confirmed by the Catholic missionaries who visited the country—long after Pinto—in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Those missionaries themselves have, indeed, been taxed, one and all, with a proneness to marvel-making and exaggerating; but no one has presumed to reject their narratives as altogether fabulous, or to set down these monks as “liars of the first magnitude.” The same allowances, indulgence, and respect which have been allowed to these friars, who had been trained to superstition, and who, in their native countries in Europe, had seen little of the world beyond their cloisters, ought to be extended to Pinto, a poor badly-educated mariner, who was always too busy or in too much trouble to keep any journal; and who, at the distance of many years, wrote, or more probably dictated, the accounts of all that he had seen and heard in so many strange countries during the course of nearly a quarter of a century.

In speaking of Siam he correctly describes (and he is the first European traveller that does so) the immense number of elephants, the high superstitious value attached to *white* elephants, the royal title of "Lord of the White Elephants," &c. There was a time when people would no more believe that there could be white elephants than that there were black swans; but Australia has confuted a classical proverb,* by sending us plenty of black swans, and modern travellers have found white elephants in Siam. In fact, in that peculiar region animal nature sports much in *albinos*; besides white elephants, which are kept in the stables of the king, and treated with veneration, modern travellers have seen in Siam white buffaloes, white deer, and white monkeys; and even a white porpoise has been observed in the Gulf of Siam.† These creatures are permanently white, and not for a season, as are some animals in the high latitudes and colder regions. It has been reasonably concluded that this anomaly in colour is connected with some peculiarities of the Siamese climate.

Pinto was also the first European to mention the great lake which exists in the interior of Siam, in the parallel of Arguthia.

After many adventures he got free from the Burman tyrant, embarked in a Portuguese vessel on the coast of Pegu, sailed to Bengal, and went thence to Goa. Being still as poor as ever, he soon resolved to return to China and Japan, or the Loo-Choo islands, "to see," says he, "whether in those countries where I had so often lost my cloak

* "*Rara avis in terris nigroque simillima cygno.*"

† Finlayson's '*Mission to Siam and Hué.*'

I might not find a better than the one I had now to my back." The junk in which he embarked was compelled to winter in the Straits of Sunda. Here he found fresh wars and troubles, more tyrants and more victims; or, like Dante, in the infernal regions, "*nuovi tormenti e nuovi tormentati*." He and about forty more Portuguese engaged as auxiliaries. In one of their bloody battles they took prisoner an old Portuguese who was fighting on the other side. His name was Nuno Rodriguez Tabora: he had been captain of a war-ship under Alphonso d'Albuquerque; he had assisted that famous captain in laying the foundations of the Portuguese colonies at Ormuz and Calicut; he had served with honour under Lopo Suarez and Dom Enrico de Meneses, who succeeded to the charge of Governor of India upon the death of Vasco di Gama. But fortune turned her smiles into frowns. He was sent with Admiral Francisco de Saa to erect a fort at Sunda, "for the fear that was entertained of the Spaniards, who at this time were going to the Molucca islands by the route which Magalhaens had discovered for them."* He suffered shipwreck on that coast, was made prisoner by the natives, and made himself a renegado in order to save his life. He had lived twenty-three years as a Pagan among Pagans; but he was still at heart a devout Catholic, penitent for his great guilt, and

* Fernando Magalhaens (commonly but incorrectly called *Magellan*) discovered the straits which separate the continent of South America from Tierra del Fuego, and which bear his name, in the year 1520, or about seventeen years before Pinto went to the East. Magalhaens was a Portuguese, but he had deserted the service of his country for that of Spain. Taking part in the wars of a native chief, he was killed in battle on the small island of Matan.

eager to be reconciled to the mother church—which, in the end, he was;—for, being returned to Malacca, he was re-admitted into the church.

At the proper season Pinto took his departure for China, in a great awkward junk. After sailing badly for twenty-two days, the junk struck upon a reef of rocks.* The Chinese mariners made a large raft; but when they had made it they refused to admit the Portuguese upon it:—

“For this was a time in which, as it is said, the father does nothing for the son, nor the son for the father, but every body thinks only of himself.”

The Chinese were forty in number, the Portuguese no more than twenty-eight; but Pinto and his countrymen leaped upon the raft, sword in hand, and fought the Chinese, who were armed with axes, so desperately, “that they killed or drowned the whole forty of them in about the space of time it takes to say three or four *Credos*.” But sixteen of the victors were killed, and of the remaining twelve, four died of their wounds the day after. Famine stepped upon the raft with the conquerors. They resolved to die rather than eat their own dead countrymen; but at the end of four days a poor Caffre servant died, and they lived upon his body for five days. They then landed on a barbarous island, where the people treated them very cruelly, and sold them to a merchant of the Celebes as slaves. The merchant re-sold them to a native prince, who very munificently gave

* Pinto's shipwrecks are, indeed, rather numerous; but we must recollect the ignorance of his countrymen as to the navigation of most of those seas, and the nature of the vessels, and unskilfulness of the mariners he generally sailed with. Even now the annual loss of these junks is prodigious.

them their liberty, and sent them (probably in a Bugi *proa* or *paduakan*) back to Sunda. There Pinto found some generous countrymen, who lent him a little money to trade with. Instead of going to China he went again to Siam, and, when there, instead of merchandizing, he entered the king's service with many other Portuguese, and went campaigning. Here we find again his habitual exorbitance in numerals. The King of Siam opens the war with 400,000 men, and in one battle kills 130,000 of the enemy!

Returning from his campaign, the King of the White Elephants was poisoned by his adulterous wife: his infant son was placed upon the throne, but very soon put to death; a civil war broke out, and then the terrible Burman tyrant, with "numbers numberless," invaded Siam, with the determination of conquering the whole country, of assuming to himself the title of "Lord of the White Elephants," and of then marching upon Peking. He had many Portuguese with him, and Diego Suarez was his quartermaster-general and chief military adviser. But while his Burman Majesty was besieging the capital of Siam, a revolt broke out in Pegu, and obliged him to retire thither. Pinto also transferred his person and his fortunes to Pegu, and seeing that so many of his countrymen were fighting for the Burmans, and that they were likely to be the winning party, he joined them once more. He witnessed more sieges and slaughters, made some money, and returned again to Malacca. There he soon joined a trading flotilla that was bound for Japan and China.

The Japanese were in no humour for trade, as their king was dead, and they were engaged in a fierce civil war. For once the Portuguese had the

grace to remain quiet and join neither party. Taking off two Japanese with him, Fernam Mendez soon went to China, traded along the coast—not without adventures—and then returned to Malacca, where he saw for the first time the Reverend Father Francis Xavier, who had arrived a few days before by way of the Moluccas, “with the fame of a holy man.” Father Francis converted one of the Japanese,* and, by his prayers, preaching, and holy example, reformed the Portuguese, who, verily, must have needed reformation. Some very miraculous stories are here told of the saintly personage who sustained the spirits of his countrymen during a siege, and then sent them full of a devout and irresistible courage against their Pagan foes. From this time Fernam Mendez has very little to say of any other subject than Father Francis Xavier, whose words and deeds and disputations with the Bonzes he records with great reverence. He performed several voyages with this fearless Jesuit missionary, but it was not his fortune to be present at his death. That event—marked with the largest letters in the rubric of the Roman Catholic church—happened on Saturday, the 2nd of December, in the year 1552, at Shan-Shan,† on the Canton river, not far from Macao. The body of the saint was buried about a stone’s-throw from the beach; but three months afterwards it was dug up and conveyed to Malacca, and in the following year it was transported from Malacca to Goa, the capital of the Portuguese empire in the

* This Japanese convert, who received from Xavier the name of “Paul of the Holy Faith,” is frequently mentioned by succeeding missionaries and monkish writers.

† Called by our sailors St. John’s.

East. To the present day the humble and vacant grave at Shan-Shan is shown to strangers, and the Portuguese Bishop of Macao used to make an annual visit to the spot, to celebrate mass, and bring away a portion of the consecrated earth.*

Notwithstanding all the miracles that were said to be wrought by the dead body of the saint, Pinto appears to have bitterly deplored his death. He attached himself to another Jesuit missionary, and went with him to Japan, Cochin-China, and other countries; but his spirit of enterprise and his vivacity were departed from him: he thought that he was becoming neither richer nor holier; and, at last, his heart began to yearn after his native country, from which he had been absent so very many years.

After a long and indirect voyage from Japan, he reached Goa. The first thing he did there was to wait upon the new governor-general, Dom Francisco Barreto, to give his excellency an account of a letter he brought from the King of Japan. He was told to return with the letter on the morrow.

"I failed not," says Fernam Mendez, "to deliver it to him the next morning, together with the arms, the scymitars, and the other presents which that Pagan king had sent. Whereupon, after he had seen all at leisure, addressing himself unto me, '*I assure you,*' said he unto me, '*that I prize these arms which you have brought me as much as the government of India: for I hope that by the means of this present, and this letter from the King of Japan, I shall render myself so agreeable to the king our sovereign lord, that I shall be delivered from the fortune of Lisbon, where almost all of us that govern this state do go and lund for our sins.*' † Then, in acknowledgment

* 'The Chinese,' &c., by Sir J. F. Davis.

† This curious phrase signifies that the Portuguese go-

of this voyage, and the great expense I had been at, he made me many large offers, which I would by no means accept at that time. Nevertheless, I was well contented to justify before him, by attestations and acts passed expressly for it, how many times I had been made a slave for the service of the king our master; and how many times, also, I had been robbed of my merchandize: for I imagined that this would suffice to keep me, at my return into my country, from being refused that which I believed was due to me for my services; as, indeed, the viceroy passed me an act of all these things, adding thereunto the certificates which I presented unto him:—withal, he gave me a letter, addressed to the king, wherein he made so honourable a mention of me and my services that, relying on these hopes, grounded as they were on such apparent reasons as I had on my side, I embarked myself for to return into the kingdom of Portugal; so contented with the papers I carried along with me, that I counted them the best part of my estate; at leastwise, I believed so, because I was persuaded that I should no sooner ask a recompense for so many services, but it would be presently granted me. Upon this hope, being put to sea, it pleased our Lord that I arrived safely at the city of Lisbon the two-and-twentieth day of September, in the year one thousand five hundred fifty and eight, at such time as the kingdom was governed by Madam Katherina, our queen of happy memory. Having delivered her the letter then from the viceroy of the Indies, I told her by word of mouth all that I thought was important for the good of my business: whereupon she referred me to the minister of her state who had the charge of dealing in her affairs. At first he gave me very good words, but far better hopes, as indeed I held them for most assured, hearing what he said unto me. But instead of letting me see the effect thereof, he kept me these miserable papers of mine four years and a half, at the end of which all the fruit I reaped thereby was no other than the labour and pains which to

vernors general of India were despoiled of their wealth by a rapacious court as soon as they returned to Lisbon.

no purpose I had employed in these vain solicitations, and which had been more grievous unto me than all the troubles I had suffered during my voyages. Wherefore, seeing of what little profit all my past services were unto me, notwithstanding all the suit I could make, I resolved to retire myself, and remain within the terms of my misery, which I had brought along with me, and gotten by the means of many misfortunes, which was all that was resting to me of the time and wealth which I had bestowed in the service of this kingdom, leaving the judgment of this process to the Divine justice. I put this design of mine then in execution, not a little grieved that I had not done it sooner, because I might thereby, peradventure, have saved a good piece of money. For a conclusion, behold what the services have been which I have done for the space of one-and-twenty years, during which time I was thirteen times a slave, and sold sixteen times, by reason of the unlucky events of so long and painful a voyage, whereof I have made mention amply enough in this book! But although this be so, yet do I not leave to believe that the cause why I remained without the recompense whereunto I pretended for so many services and travels, rather proceeded from the Divine Providence, which permitted it to be so for my sins, than from the negligence and fault of him whom the duty of his charge seemed to oblige to do me right. For it being true that in all the kings of this kingdom, who are the lively source from whence all recompense doth flow, though many times they run through pipes more affectionate than reasonable, there is always found an holy and acknowledging zeal, accompanied with a very ample and great desire, not only to recompense those which serve them, *but also to confer great estates on them which render them no service at all*; whereby it is evident that if I and others have not been satisfied, the same happens by the only fault of the pipes, and not of the source; or rather, it is a work of the Divine justice, which cannot fail, and which disposeth of all things for the best and as is most necessary for us; and in regard whereof I ren-

der infinite thanks to the King of Heaven, whose pleasure it hath been that his Divine will should be this way accomplished, and do not complain of the kings of the earth, since my sins have made me unworthy of meriting more."*

In this melancholy but religious strain poor Pinto winds up the very long story of his 'Adventurous Voyages.'

The king, Joam III., to whom the viceroy of India gave him the letter, died in 1557, about a year before Fernam reached Portugal, and the widowed queen, Catherine of Austria, was vested with the regency for about eleven years, or until the majority of Sebastian, grandson of Joam III. Animated by a fanatical ambition, young Sebastian went over to Morocco to expel the Moors or convert them to Christianity; and in 1578 he perished in battle there, together with nearly all his host. Sebastian's uncle, Cardinal Enrique, ascended the throne, but died in 1580, when Philip II. of Spain made himself master and tyrant of Portugal.† It is said that Pinto lived through all these changes, and that when he was an old man Philip II. took great pleasure in conversing with him, and in hearing from his own lips the recital of his adventures.‡ But no authority is quoted for these assertions, which, in themselves, do not appear very probable. In 1580 Pinto would have been seventy years old. It is not very likely that, considering the hard life he had led, he should live so long; but, supposing him to have been alive when the Spaniards imposed their yoke on the Portuguese, it is still less likely

* Old English Translation of 1663, by Henry Cogan.

† The Spaniards maintained their dominion from 1580 to 1641.

‡ *Defence Apologétique*, prefixed to the Paris editions.

that so proud and umbrageous a monarch as Philip II. should have admitted the poor mariner into his presence. The very probable fate of the wanderer is, that he died in poverty and obscurity. The government and nation which allowed the immortal Luis de Camoens, his contemporary, to live upon alms and perish in an hospital, would scarcely be capable of generosity towards Fernam Mendez Pinto.*

It has been assumed, even by a good-natured apologist, that our mariner could not plead *services* to the Portuguese crown.† The fact appears to us otherwise. No doubt, during his piratical career with Faria, and his campaigning in Pegu, Ava, and Siam, he had thought little enough of the interests of his king, or of any other interests except his own and those of his comrades; but he had opened the way to a profitable trade with Loo-Choo, Japan, and other islands; he had imparted much useful information to the rulers in Portuguese India; and he had devoted some years of his life to the service of those who were engaged in propagating Catholicism in the East—an object more precious in the eyes of the devout court of Lisbon than any other, or than all other objects put together.

* For three or four years the poet Camoens and Pinto must have been in the remote East, and have gazed at the constellation of the Cross together. The poet sailed from Portugal for India in 1553, and the mariner, as we have seen, did not return from India to Portugal until 1558. The adventures of Camoens (pity is it that he did not detail them himself!), his shipwrecks, his military services among the Pagans, and his constantly defeated efforts to secure money and independence, bear rather a close resemblance to those of Fernam Mendez.

† Retrospective Review.

Nicholaus Antonius (in 'Bibliotheca Hispana Nova') says,—“There are some of Pinto's epistles, published at Lisbon, which are considered as the earliest among those relating to the first mission of the Jesuits to India.” Of these epistles we have no knowledge. We learn from the same authority that “it was said that Pinto died at Almada, opposite to Lisbon;” but this is given as a mere report, and Nicholaus does not give the date of the death or burial. Nor have we been able to trace the date in any other work. The traveller's widow and one of his children—a daughter—appear to have survived him a good many years, and to have given or sold some of his manuscripts to the Jesuits.

We have said that poor Pinto's book is rather a ponderous one.* He indulges frequently in long rambling episodes; his style of narrative is generally minute and circumlocutory, and, like most of the historians of his age (who fancied they were copying the classical manner of Livy), he delights in making his personages debate and converse together, and in giving interminable dialogues and set harangues. Much, very much, of this matter is, indisputably,

“ dry as the remainder biscuit
After a voyage. ”

But we trust it has been shown in this brief abstract

* The old Portuguese editions and the old translations are in folio. In the year 1830 an edition was printed at Paris, at the expense of the French government, in *three* thick octavo volumes. This is the *latest* edition in any language; but it cannot be called a good one. It is merely a reprint of Figuier's book, with all the unnecessary embarrassment of the antiquated orthography, and without notes or comment or any kind of editing.

of his voyages and adventures, that there is matter of a more lively and attractive kind, and also that Fernam Mendez Pinto never merited the titles bestowed upon him by Cervantes and Congreve.

THE END.

